Yours affectionately

Thos. G. Stewart

A MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE AND LABORS

OF THE

REV. THOMAS G. STEWART.

BY HIS SON.

He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.—Acts xi. 24.

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PREFACE.

When first assigned the writing of this biography, a conviction of my own incompetency prompted me to decline the service; but urged by many of my father's friends, and encouraged by ministers of the gospel who were intimately acquainted with him, I felt that I could not refuse, at least, to make the attempt. I had no doubt respecting the propriety of placing his personal history before the public, but I felt the difficulty of doing justice to a character of such rare excellence, and to a course of action so peculiar and successful.

I found it impossible to trace the gradual development of such a man, and to describe his wonderful ministry, without experiencing myself emotions of pleasure and profit; and the warmest aspirations of

my heart are, that this book—written with so many misgivings—may prove satisfactory to all who knew him, and a blessing to others who may peruse it.

Many persons who have been accustomed to regard Mr. Stewart only as the powerful preacher, the untiring advocate of the cross of Christ, will see him as the kind husband, the tenderly affectionate father, whose yearnings for his own immediate family were deep and incessant. From the following record, it is presumed that a tolerably correct view may be obtained of his life and labors. There may possibly be a few numerical inaccuracies, and peradventure some minor appointments dropped, but these can be but slight and unimportant. Most of the materials were collected from individuals who were present with him, and were eye-witnesses of his activity. His detached journal, and the very few other papers which he left, proscribed continuous or frequent extracts; but a number of the most interesting parts of the diary have been literally transcribed.

From the whole, it will be seen that all Mr. Stewart's energies were devoted to the advancement of

religion—the life of God in the soul of man—"the kingdom" which "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost." In this, and in other respects, he has bequeathed to his successors in the ministry, an example which is scarcely less serviceable than the services of his active life.

W. G. S.

PHILADELPHIA, *May* 1, 1858.

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INTRODUCTION.

The press, in the books which it scatters broadcast over the land, does not simply mould and fashion, but to a very considerable extent, it also follows popular taste, and is in this an indication of the state of the public mind to which it caters. The remembrance of this truth, of which even a superficial observation will convince us, shows that there is now just reason for every good man to congratulate himself. At no former period have the current issues of that potent agent of civilization and Christianity been so deeply imbued with the spirit, or so directly treated of "the truth which is according to godliness."

While the secular periodicals have ever found business interests promoted by giving to the once well-nigh ostracized subject of religion in its practical workings, a prominent place in their columns, volume after volume, gathering its materials from the same field, demanding, not in vain, a more permanent place in our regard, in large and repeated editions, have rapidly succeeded each other. The pen, it is true, is still employed far too largely in the production of that description of literature, which calls good

evil and evil good; or at best in illustrating, embellishing and rendering attractive sentiments and views of life which tend to nothing higher than to make man more and more of the earth, earthy; but still, no one can take a survey of the shelves of our booksellers, and remember what a few short years ago would have exhibited there, without perceiving that a happy change, in this respect, has been and is in progress.

That portion of the department of religious reading which has recently received the largest and most attractive contributions, and which, perhaps, always most readily commanded popular attention, is, undoubtedly, biography. Nothing strikes like a fact. Truth in action appeals at once to the understanding and the heart.

"We see the man immortal,"

and the lives of Christian believers become pleasing instructors to us, because they illustrate in the most impressive manner the two important points—*as to what the soul may experience of God, and what the life may do for God.*

Wesleyan literature across the waters, it is well known, has, for years, been rich in its stores of this description, especially in the lives of its deceased ministers, to say nothing of those princes and great men in Israel, who under God were the originators and master spirits of that mighty religious movement, which stands out before the world now as our glorious Methodism; men, whose names have become household words, wherever vital piety is

known and honored; the lives of Bramwell, and Stoner, and Smith, and Langdon, and Dawson and others, though more humble in their pretensions, have been attested as possessing merits of a rare character. If American Methodism has in the past appeared to be behind her trans-Atlantic sister in this respect, the deficiency is now being provided for, and, judging from the number of memoirs and autobiographies at this time rapidly appearing, before the present decade shall have expired, may cease to exist. Garrettson, Collins, Finley, Cartwright, Young and others already stand before the Methodist public in volumes of greater or lesser capacity, and the present publication asks some position in this honored rank for another name, less widely known perhaps, but yet held in grateful remembrance by those who once witnessed how he led

"to glorious war
The sacramental host of God's elect."

Thomas G. Stewart was a good man, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost;" and if that be a just criterion which Mr. Wesley lays down when he says, "He is the best preacher who saves the most souls," then the reading of this narrative will show that the place which the subject of it is entitled to occupy among the ambassadors of the cross, is one which may well command for him our high regard. As it respects the salvation of sinners, few men in the same length of time have surpassed him in making full proof of their ministry. Awakened in the providence

of God in a peculiar manner, and subsequently converted and called into the holy office, the great pervading thought ever afterward with him appeared to be, that "God had appeared to him to make him a minister, to send him to open men's eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ;" and this high commission, with all the powers of body and soul, he labored faithfully to execute. No man could come in contact with him without being made sensible of this. The question with him was not where he could enjoy the most ease, where he could get the most money, or where and how he could gain the most applause, but how and where he could win the most souls to Christ. This was his master passion. If ever there was a man absorbingly in earnest in this work, he was that man. Speaking of men in the ministry: "An earnest man," says John Angell James, "must of necessity be an active one. I see my object," he exclaims; "it stands out in bold relief, clearly depicted before my eyes, and I will leave no effort untried to accomplish it. I have made up my mind to labor, to self-denial, to fatigue, and if I do not succeed, it shall not be for the want of determined, continuous effort. Such is his resolution, and his practice is like it. He is always at work. You know where to find him and how he is employed. He is the very type of diligence. Labor is pleasure. No difficulties deter him, no disappointments dishearten him." Who

that knew him can fail to remember how fully this description was exemplified in Stewart. He was a true member of that band which one has called "The *Legio Fulminea*—the Thundering Legion of Methodism, whose duty it was to break and scatter the ranks of the enemy, to pursue and shout onward in the rout, and to leave the field covered with the spoils of victory."

Every one must perceive that no special claims, on the score of literary qualification, were or could be made for him; but with his smooth stones out of the brook, he went up to do battle in the name of the Lord of Hosts, and again and again the Goliah of sin lay slain before him. No one, more favorably circumstanced than he was in regard to the helps for ministerial training, should fall into the error of supposing that because God, through him, did so much without them, he may not, in other cases, do much more with them; but while we do our utmost in improving our superior advantages, we may regard him as an example, and expect Divine Providence from time to time to raise up more to show how God with "the foolish things of this world," as men consider them, "confounds the things that are wise; and with the weak things of the world confounds the things which are mighty; and base things of this world, and things which are despised, yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are."

S. Y. MONROE.

N. J. Conference.

Life of Rev. Thomas G. Stewart.

LIFE OF REV. THOMAS G. STEWART.

CHAPTER I.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS REMOVAL TO OHIO.

Birth—Ancestry—Taught to pray—A mother's influence—Death of his mother—Mysteries of Providence—His father's marriage—Unhappiness—Hardships—Seeks pleasure in society—Attends Methodist meeting—Singular presentiment—Deserts his home—Employed on a farm—Apprenticed to the manufacture of woollen cloths—New resolutions—Goes to Cedarville, N. J.—Marriage—Visits home—Erects family altar in his own house—Removes to Burlington—Religious inquiries—Examines predestination—Removes to Colebrookdale, Pa.—Levi Bull—(Mr. Stewart) goes into business—Failure.

THOMAS G. STEWART was born in Burlington County, in the State of New Jersey, two miles northeast of the City of Burlington, on the 30th of October, 1790. His father had four wives; the mother of Thomas was the second, and he was the fifth of eight children, one of whom, his only brother, died when less than three months old. His paternal ancestry were of Scotch origin; they were

strongly attached to the established Church of England, to the faith and forms of which his father adhered with pertinacity, up to the date of Thomas' conversion. His mother was connected with the Society of Friends, and as his early education was intrusted wholly to her, he was taught to live a moral life; to "do to others as he would have them do to him." Happy for young Thomas, his mother's views were orthodox; she carefully read and reflected upon the word of God; pondered the language of Christ in her heart, and instructed her children accordingly. Among Thomas' first recorded recollections, was the circumstance of his infant feet being led into the seclusion of his mother's chamber, where he was taught to repeat the Lord's prayer, and to love and revere the name of God, of whom he heard his father read every Sabbath day. In subsequent years, he referred with tender and grateful emotions to those precious seasons, when his affectionate mother planted the seeds of Christianity in his youthful heart, which he ever believed exerted a powerful and happy influence upon his character and life. In his seventh year, he met with an irreparable loss, in the death of his excellent mother. Though erring and short-sighted man may wonder at that inscrutable Providence which cuts off a devoted mother from her infants, yet He who holds the destinies of creation in His mighty grasp, and sways an irresistible sceptre over the universe, acts not without a reason; and faith teaches us a patient submission to His doings, believing, when

the veil is removed and God's ways are revealed to man, that he will joyfully exclaim:—

"My Jesus hath done all things well."

Mr. Stewart's father, in a short time, married Mrs. Mary Tuley, a widow possessing a proud, supercilious spirit, whose character was antagonistic in every point to that of her amiable predecessor. And now Thomas began to tread a thorny path. The children incorporated into the family by his father's unfortunate union, were a constant source of feud, and the unqualified sarcasm of the haughty and unfeeling step-mother, daily fell with the crushing weight of an avalanche upon the poor boy's head. But recollecting the wise and wholesome counsel of her about whom he continually wept in secret, he pursued the even tenor of his way, essaying to return good for evil, and thus conciliate the churlish members of the newly-organized household. The circumstances by which he was surrounded were adverse, in every particular, to his improvement in morality; he was a perpetual subject to aggravating family assaults, privations, unceasing and onerous toil, and many other hardships, which, but for a naturally robust constitution, he would not have been able to sustain. Familiarity with scenes of a heart-callousing character, induced a disposition of recklessness that made him a sort of demagogue or ringleader among the lads who consorted with him. He was bold, hasty, and intrepid, and displayed a mental vigor which, had he been favored with early

educational advantages, must have elevated him above the standard of ordinary students.

Deprived of his only religious counsellor, and without a single friend to warn him of the dangerous quicksands and treacherous snares with which life is beset, he was left to select such society and amusements as the disreputable district furnished. He was of a social spirit; relished what was termed "a good song," and "a merry dance," consequently was a favorite guest at all convivial parties in the neighborhood.

He occasionally attended Methodist meeting in the house of Mr. Hewlitt Hancock, and the sermons preached, for a little time, seemed to find a lodgement in his susceptible heart; but circumscribed by influences so disastrous, the good effect was soon erased. The seed fell, but alas! "the fowls came and devoured it." At the age of seventeen, after attending one of these meetings, he was signally visited by the Holy Spirit's gracious influence; his serious thought recurred to the example and instruction of his departed mother, and both her language and the warning voice of the Methodist preacher impressed him in a more forcible manner than at any previous time. "Oh," he was led to exclaim, "I wish I might enjoy what I hear these Christians speak of. If I did, *I think I could preach myself!* Who knows but that I will preach some time. I hope I may! *I think I shall!*" And in this train of thought, he afterwards declared that he imagined himself standing on the walls of Zion, sounding the gospel trumpet, and exhorting

with that peculiar vehemence which subsequently characterized his indefatigable efforts for the salvation of his fellow creatures.

Perpetually harassed by animadversions from the sovereign of his sorrowful home, and entertaining only the crude and misguiding judgment of "an alien from the commonwealth of Israel" and its God, whose guidance invariably conducts aright, he, at the age of eighteen, resolved to desert his father's farm and go to sea! He was charmed with the interesting adventures of travelers which he had read: he ardently longed to rove the wide earth and blue sea, uncontrolled and free as the winged birds, and he pictured to himself a grand and terrific storm off some rocky promontory, when he should stand firm and unappalled upon the deck of the rolling ship, until eventually finding all hope fled, he should display unswerving prowess by assisting in the manufacture of an extensive raft, and thus become instrumental in saving many from a watery grave.

Was such imagery the foreshadowing of the storms of religious opposition he should encounter, and his arduous exertions to rescue drowning souls from that fearful death that never, never dies?

Thomas left clandestinely the house which had been the site of early loving experience and succeeding painful scenes, and repairing to Philadelphia, sought, with no small degree of enthusiasm, a vessel with whose captain he might engage as a common sailor.

Oh! who may tell the whole influence of a united,

happy home, where the eyes of affectionate parents beam with warm solicitude, and those of brothers and sisters emit gleams of sunshine that carry peace and joy to the domestic circle? If the home-hearth be soothing, what effect have labor, fatigue, physical affliction, or adversity upon the spirit? True, they may press for a moment, but is not the fireside made more bright, and are not the hearts that cluster there made purer and happier by the demonstration of earnest sympathy and love of those disinterested ones who hover, like guardian angels, around the suffering? Ye who have never known the deprivation of such a blissful spot, ye who have not experienced the intense pain of a heart, bursting with anguish, arising from parental neglect or partiality, ye who have not looked upon the beautiful earth and moved among gay and busy crowds, sighing for an affectionate companion, ye do but lightly estimate the blessing of a peaceful home.

> "Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
> Of Paradise that has survived the fall."

As the boy pursued his solitary journey over the twenty miles intervening between Burlington and his destination, his thoughts took a melancholy coloring. He reflected upon his early life so pleasant in the comfortable home—of his precious mother's grave, of the last time he heard her musical voice; and its loving tone still rang, like the echo of a mellow horn, among the high and craggy hills of trouble that rose between that glad hour and the

present. Then his mind dwelt with profoundest sorrow upon the unhappy event, which had not only driven him a homeless wanderer from the place of his birth, but also from the place which he had occupied in his father's heart. He endeavored to think kindly of them whom he had left behind, and he repeated the sentiment—

"To fly from, need not be to hate mankind."

Warm tears coursed down his cheeks as he seated himself occasionally to rest, and then, a lingering glance was cast in the direction of the home he had forsaken, and his feeling soul seemed to cling with painful tenacity to departed, social hours and to the friendships he was then sacrificing. He was compelled to recall his mind to joyous imaginations to avert despondency, but despite strong efforts to the contrary, his heart surrendered itself to the luxury of grief, and its life-blood dropped in every foot-print. He felt he should be a houseless pilgrim among heartless multitudes, and for a moment reflected that perhaps he was casting away the few comforts which still arose, like shrubs in a desert, to glad his weary pathway. But stimulating himself with dazzling hopes of a brighter future, he plodded resolutely forward. Arriving at Philadelphia, and failing to secure a situation on shipboard, he was persuaded to postpone his sea-going intentions till spring, at which time he hoped to realize the pleasure with which his imagination had invested the life of a sailor. He crossed the Schuylkill River, and

proceeding five miles into the country, engaged with a Pennsylvania farmer to assist in the autumn labors. When settled in this quiet home, his mind became composed, and he inspected his condition with more calmness and mature judgment, resolving to abandon the idea of ocean life, to begin the government of his conduct by strict principles of virtue and integrity, and aspire to a position among the educated and respected. Being but nineteen years of age, he entered a woollen factory, at the Falls of the Schuylkill, engaging himself as an apprentice to the carding, spinning, and general manufacturing of woollen cloth. After a summary apprenticeship of three weeks, he was voluntarily remunerated by his liberal employer, Mr. John Kershaw, and at the expiration of twelve months, his allotted period of subordinate service, he was complimented by experienced dealers in the article manufactured, by the declaration: "Thomas Stewart is an unexampled American spinner." At this time an extensive factory was erected in Cedarville, New Jersey, and probably through the recommendation of this eulogium, young Stewart was solicited to assume the charge of it. Accepting the proposal, he in less than two years from the departure from his father's house, found himself comfortably located in a lucrative office, and, like Joseph in Egypt, "a ruler over all the people save the throne." He boarded at the house of Mr. David Harris, an eminently pious Presbyterian, and his was the first family in which he ever witnessed "home worship."

Notwithstanding the attractions which religion had presented to his mind, it is evident that he continued, up to this time, a stranger to the nature of Christianity. He maintained a distinguishing dignity of character, was rigidly just in all his business transactions, inflexibly true to his word, and ambitious to present his friends with a faultless morality. He added to these, an attractive suavity of manner, and an admirable courtesy of mien, which were sure to win him a welcome by those who were favored with his acquaintance, and all concurred in pronouncing him, at this time, the very embodiment of genuine wit, accomplishment, and good sense. Referring to this date in his subsequent dottings down, he says: "I carried a grateful remembrance of David Harris and the kind people of Cedarville for thirty years."

Esteemed among the families of the village and adjacent farms, he was a frequent guest of the friends whose hospitality was so generously extended to him. Grateful for the numerous demonstrations of true friendship which he observed, he was disposed to show a just appreciation, by the utmost politeness in conducting those who came to the factory, from one department to another, exhibiting the various phases of the material in course of weaving, and explaining the utility of each distinct section of machinery. Upon one occasion, Miss Sarah B. Reeves, who was visiting the sister-in-law of Mr. John Moore, came, accompanied by a circle of acquaintances, to witness the novel operations of the factory. Miss Reeves

was the daughter of Johnson Reeves, who resided near Bridgeton. He was a rigorously Calvinistic Presbyterian; had trained his children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and in the peculiar doctrines of election. Sarah united herself with the church and entered its communion at the age of fourteen; and, during six years, held fast the profession of her faith without wavering, presenting an exemplary, pious character to the companions of her youth. It is not singular that with Mr. Stewart's admiration of piety, he should be impressed with this young lady's excellence, and eventually propose to her a share in his humble lot. They were united on the 25th day of December, 1810. A few weeks subsequent he received a message from his father, who had been informed of his son's marriage, including an invitation to visit the homestead, accompanied by his wife. In compliance, the youthful bride and groom proceeded to Camden, and taking one of the regular line of packets plying upon the Delaware, arrived at Burlington after a passage of *thirteen hours*. During the brief sojourn of Mr. and Mrs. Stewart at the farm, his step-mother was the soul of civility to her guests. In the spring of 1811, Mr. Stewart was induced to return to the Falls of Schuylkill and resume his place at the loom, between which and himself there seemed to be an attachment, from the fact that it was the first he had practised upon. Here he furnished a small house, and the first night of his removal, although still a stranger to the covenant of promise, erected an altar of prayer, and laying upon

it with heartfelt sincerity a thank offering, he presented to God the sacrifice of a grateful spirit. The family altar thus established was supported, almost without interruption, until his summons from earth. After a twelvemonth's residence here, a letter was received from Mr. Stewart, who now began to feel the infirmities of age, urging his son to return permanently to the farm, and take the oversight of it upon himself. Considering his father's necessity, he repaired immediately to Burlington, and was duly installed into the management of the acres, which, but a few short years before, he had left with no expectation of beholding again under such favorable auspices. He now attended the Episcopal church, under the pastoral charge of Rev. Dr. Wharton. Mr. Stewart was punctual in attendance, and constantly evidenced the utmost reverence for sacred things. One Sabbath day, in course of the service, the chorister was unable promptly to command a tune, appropriate to the measure of the hymn given out. Thomas' ready mind instantly calling up a suitable one, he struck upon it and led off confidently, the congregation uniting and appearing delighted with their deliverance from an apprehended failure. The following day he was invited to conduct the music of the choir. Ever ready to oblige, and a little ambitious to sustain his easily-acquired reputation, he accepted the call and discharged the functions of his office satisfactorily and creditably while he remained in the place. Upon one occasion, a lady inquired of his father where his son received his

musical education. "Humph!" returned the matter-of-fact old gentleman, "I suppose at the same academy in which he pursued his other studies—*at the handle of the plough!*"

After much serious reflection in regard to his sinful state, Mr. Stewart resolved to be baptized, and, accordingly, offered himself a candidate for that holy ordinance. Subsequently, feeling his guilt pressing him with a weight too ponderous and painful to be endured, he wandered about in the intensest agony of soul. The Methodists at this time held meetings in a small frame building, which stood on Broad St., near High. Fathers Osborne and Wooley, two famous veterans of the cross, were colleagues on "Burlington Circuit," which included the whole of Burlington County, and parts of several others. It was called "a four weeks circuit;" each minister of the gospel preaching in the same place once a month. James Sterling, Samuel Stockton, Hewlitt Hancock, and John Haines, were some of the pillars that supported the comparatively small fabric of Methodism in Burlington at this time. The society was zealous, energetic, and united! This was what young Mr. Stewart was seeking after: a religion that was *tangible*—that made its possessor *feel*, rejoice, and "tell his rapture all abroad." He found his way to the little frame house, he heard the narration of Christian experience, the story of spiritual conflicts and triumphs through grace; he heard holy men and women tell of earthly sorrows overbalanced by heavenly joys, of tribulation in the Christian pil-

grimage subdued by the peace of God, which is able to hush the tumult of worldly woe and impart a celestial calm to the heart made a temple for the indwelling of Christ. There too he listened enraptured to the simple exposition of the "more sure word of prophecy" by the venerable fathers who arrived once a fortnight. His soul was moved by the fervent prayers of the earnest brethren; delighted with the lively airs in which the assemblies unanimously joined. The economy of the Methodist church is well calculated to direct the minds of men who are feeling after Jesus and visited by the Holy Spirit's gracious influence into the right path! Mr. Stewart attended class-meetings occasionally; was present at the prayer-circle during the week, always enthusiastic, and profitable; and several times himself lifted up his voice in fervent supplication to the mercy-seat. Had providential circumstances favored him with wholesome counsellors, or given him access to the productions of the eminent fathers of Methodism, his mind must have been greatly strengthened and edified; but he did not consider himself sufficiently familiar with any of the members of that church to converse privately with them, and the scarcity of books proscribed the religious information to be derived from that source. He read the Bible studiously; parts of it gave him much enjoyment, while other portions made him wretched beyond description. Such passages as, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God," and "Except ye repent ye shall all

likewise perish," brought fearful forebodings into his conscious spirit; but "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and "Jesus Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," encouraged him to come boldly to a throne of grace, and hope that through the merit of the Crucified, pardon and redemption might be obtained. His conversation with Mrs. Stewart and others on the subject of predestination, sharpened his logical powers, but resulted in the partial subversion of his Arminian views. He marshaled the specious objections to his tenets before him, and essayed to examine them in every phase. Although guided by the reasoning abilities of his own mind alone, his investigations eventuated in "a plenary rejection of the horrible doctrine of election root and branch." Such was the incipient tutorage by which Mr. Stewart was being prepared by the Great Head of the church to be a chosen vessel of honor in the ranks of evangelists. How evident is it that Providence hath gracious designs in all his various dispensations; the finite mind of man cannot at first perceive the projects of the Almighty, but how often do subsequent revelations show that in all his mysterious and sometimes afflictive measures, individual blessings, or perhaps the benefit of mankind generally is being accomplished. Mr. Stewart now arrived at that epoch in his experience when he felt the displeasure of God against him, because he "held the truth in unright-

eousness." He, in some measure at least, understood the plan of salvation; acknowledged the merit of Christ in offering himself a substitute for the death of the world, saw that his sacrificial blood must be efficacious in cleansing all who come to God by Him. Nevertheless he acted to too great an extent in opposition to the thorough conviction of his conscience, and he almost seemed to hear echoing in his ears the terrible denunciation, "you knew your duty, and you did it not." His knowledge of the truth struggled against sin, reproved him every time he violated one of God's commandments, dissuaded when about to partake of any forbidden indulgence, and warned him of the punishment of trespassing God's laws. He saw himself, moreover, in danger of judgment and punishment, yet he took no prompt and decided step to secure the blessing of peace and pardon. There were straggling thorns which "sprang up and choked the word, and it became unfruitful." Thus in the midst of privileges not sufficiently appreciated or improved, passed two years of his life. Ah! the wily adversary is ever on the alert, to battle with the souls of such as he has reason to suppose will take a firm and lofty stand in favor of building up the glorious kingdom of God.

Receiving a proposal from the proprietor of a factory in Pennsylvania, and considering that his business was vastly more lucrative, and also more consonant with his feelings, he procured a competent laborer to fill the vacancy made by his exit from the farm, and once more bidding adieu to his father and

the home of his nativity, he removed his family to Colebrookdale. In this village, there was no Methodist church, and Mr. and Mrs. Stewart were again driven within the Protestant Episcopal pale. Their pastor, Rev. Levi Bull, was a zealous and untiring advocate for the Captain whose cause he espoused. Never did a herald of the cross raise a shriller trumpet to apprise sinners of their peril; never was messenger of God inspired with more soul-impressed animation in crying, "Behold the Lamb." Mr. Bull had been educated by his father, Col. Bull, an officer in the American army, with reference to the legal profession, but having been powerfully converted while pursuing his collegiate studies, he straightway veered into a theological channel, and devoted his time and talents fully and unreservedly to a preparation for the work of the ministry. Betraying a religious enthusiasm, which is frequently the sequence of genuine Christianity, the apprehension of his family was excited that his mind was wandering from its proper orbit, and his father unhesitatingly expressed his opinion that "Levi was actually going crazy." But replying, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" he continued to praise God for his wonderful goodness to the children of men, and to beseech his fellow-creatures to be reconciled to God through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

By the dispensations of this holy man of God, Mr. Stewart was much benefited theoretically, but it is plain that he was not made an experimental par-

taker of "like precious faith with him through the righteousness of God." He found less earnestness and effectual fervent prayer among the laity of Colebrookdale than in Burlington, and from this lower temperature of spiritual atmosphere, although blessed with increased gospel light, he became less thoughtful upon personal piety.

In November, 1814, aspiring still higher in temporal ambition, he invested in new machinery the not inconsiderable sum amassed by diligence, industry, and frugality, and entered into a partnership with Mr. Eldad Cook. Fortune now appeared to be opening her generous portals to him, whose condition hitherto had been migratory and unsettled. Dreams of affluence mingled pleasingly with his thoughts of the future, and his business enterprise at once absorbed his study and contemplation to the total exclusion of all religious care.

Poor, dependent man! how prone to forget the bountiful Donor of every good and perfect gift, if but the prospect of wealth dazzle his eager eyes! Arrived at a commanding summit, he strains his longing vision and peers confidently through the vista of hope, but alas! how often does the summer landscape fade, the beautiful lake prove a deceitful mirage, and man's anticipation fail to be realized.

"Why all this toil for triumph of an hour?
What though we wade in wealth or soar in fame?
Earth's highest station ends in 'Here he lies!'
And 'dust to dust,' concludes her noblest song."

In the lapse of one short year, Thomas Stewart

realized that this was not the location designed by the Omniscient for him to occupy. Listening to the siren voice of a deluding enemy, by what severe lessons are we often compelled to learn our duty! Recovering from heavy losses sustained through the carrying away of a dam by inundation during the equinoctial rains of June, and while struggling to meet the extra expense incurred, the equinoctial clouds of September gathered over the sky, their waters flooded the country, and rushing with irresistible strength against the new embankment, lay open a breach irreparably wide, and speedily dashed away the sanguine hopes of the unfortunate firm of Stewart and Cook.

CHAPTER II.

CONVERSION AND MANIFESTATION OF ZEAL.

Settles in Warren — Emigrants — Attends the Presbyterian church — Death of Judge A—— — Awakened — Resolves to seek God—Conversion—Exhorts—Two souls convicted of sin thereby — Religious fervor of Mr. Stewart — Prayer-meeting organized—Revival in the court-house—Reflections—Controversies—Studies.

In the spring of 1816, we find Mr. Stewart in Warren, Trumbull County, Ohio, whither he had gone in company with his brother-in-law, Lewis Reeves, to seek employment in "the new countries." Mrs. Stewart did not accompany him; but tarried in Bridgeton till the intelligence should be received that a dwelling was secured and business prospects offered a comfortable home in the West. The 30th of April, a letter from her husband announced the fact, that all things were now in readiness for her, and only awaited her presence to perfect the bliss of his home. Speedy preparations were made for an exodus. On the 12th of May, a caravan, peculiar to those emigrating times, consisting of two heavy Conestoga wagons, eight horses, and seventeen individuals, departed from Philadelphia, and after a

tedious journey of three weeks, arrived at its destination on the Mahoning River, forty miles from Lake Erie, eighty miles from Pittsburg. Mrs. Stewart was now the mother of two children; the older a daughter of three years, the younger a son of six months. The others of the company were Edward Welch, wife, and three children; Stephen Reeves, wife, and three sons; Samuel Elwell and wife; Thomas Brown with Mrs. Reeves, the mother of Mrs. Stewart, now a widow nearly sixty years of age. After Mr. Stewart's settlement in Warren, he and his little family lived in peace and contentment! it is true they were subject to numerous deprivations; their remoteness from those loved ones who came with them—the want of that refinement in society to which they had been accustomed, and the inconvenience of their log-house arrangements; upon all they could have desired an improvement, but these sacrifices had been anticipated, and they were ready to endure the hardships of new settlers, if they might avail themselves of the overbalancing advantages. Land was arable and cheap; each emigrant could purchase a small tract, and requiring but little not produced by his farm, live economically "beneath his own vine and fig-tree, none daring to molest or make him afraid."

During the first two years, no symptoms of religious exercise were exhibited by him who but a short time before was so deeply concerned for his spiritual welfare. On the Sabbath, he always occupied a seat among the Presbyterians in public wor-

ship, which was held alternately with the Baptist congregation in the village court-house, both denominations, as yet, being too limited in numbers and too feeble pecuniarily to venture the erection of a church edifice. But the anxiety he once experienced had fled, and there was a fearful apathy settled down upon his soul. How careful should the sinner, awakened to a consciousness of his lamentable condition, be, lest the Spirit grieved and quenched take its ultimate flight, leaving the naked soul *alone*—without God. Mr. Stewart was the more strongly attached to the Presbyterians from the fact that his wife adhered strenuously and pertinaciously to the doctrines of that sect—although he, as stated before, was an unwavering convert to Arminianism.

In the early part of 1819, a fire occurred in Warren. Mr. Stewart went into the street after the alarm had been given, and encountering Judge A——, an infidel, with whom he was familiar, inquired concerning the probable extent of the conflagration. An answer was made, and they stood conversing for a few minutes, when the Judge was seized with apoplexy, and fell dead at his feet. The sudden and terrible cutting off of one, in his presence, who, to appearance, was in the enjoyment of equally good health with himself, filled his mind with serious inquiry and apprehension. Both were in "the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity;" he felt himself as guilty as Judge A—— in the sight of Him who held their life in his hand. This circumstance was a convincing proof that God's spirit would

not always strive with man. Despising the Christian religion, renouncing the inspiration of the Bible, scoffing at holy things, the judge of men had been called unexpectedly to stand before a more fearful tribunal, and give an unreserved account for the deeds done in the body. "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy;" this and other passages of Scripture of similar signification lingered in Mr. Stewart's troubled mind, and compelled him to consider his own imminent peril, and led him to examine his own heart still hapless and unregenerate, still grovelling with unsatisfying, earthly pleasures. Then he reflected upon God's infinite love, and the voluntary suffering of the Saviour; took a retrospective glance over his history, and, perceiving that his conduct clamored loudly for an administration of God's retributive justice, in that he had continually rejected Christ's offers of mercy and pardon, "he went out and wept bitterly."

"God calling yet, and shall I never hearken,
But with earth's witcheries my spirit darken?
This passing life, these passing joys all flying,
And still my soul in dreamy slumber lying!

"God calling yet, and I not yet arising!
So long his faithful, loving voice despising!
So falsely his unwearied love repaying,
He beckons still, and still I am delaying!

"God calling yet, loud at my door is knocking,
And I my heart and ear still firmer locking;
He yet is willing, ready to receive me,
Is waiting now, but ah! he soon may leave me!

"God calling yet, and I no answer giving,
I dread his yoke, yet am in bondage living;
For long I linger, but not yet forsaken,
He calls me still! Oh, my poor soul, awaken!

"God calling yet! I can no longer tarry,
Nor to my Lord a heart divided carry;
Oh, vain and empty world, your spell is broken,
Sweeter than all, the voice of God has spoken."

These stanzas, in connection with the promise and encouragements afforded by the word of God, decided him to humble himself in the shadow of the cross, with imploring eyes fixed on its bleeding victim until a new and pure heart were vouchsafed. Although, having formed some fraternal intimacies which made it necessary, he was obliged to pluck out a right eye and cut off an arm by this step, yet did he willingly sacrifice the associations of those whose affections were fixed upon things of the earth, in order to win Christ. He commenced to attend regularly a young men's prayer meeting, and did not refuse to exercise in prayer himself, when called upon in this means of grace. His conversion is thus recorded in his diary: "I had been diligently seeking after 'the light of the liberty of the children of God' for several months, when one evening, while upon my knees, I thought I would obtain the precious blessing before the close of the meeting, if earnest effort and powerful faith would prevail at a throne of mercy. I remembered the passages, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God,' and 'By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of your-

selves; it is the gift of God,' and then my mind reverted to the cheering words of Christ's sermon on the mount, 'Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened,' and I began to plead for the requisite faith, and knowing that *every one that asketh receiveth*, I tried to exercise 'the gift of God,' and repeating emphatically the lines—

> Thou, O Christ, art *all* I want,
> More than all in thee *I find*—

at the same moment reflecting how easy it was for an Omnipotent Being to perform any work, no matter how difficult, 'the opening heavens around me shone with beams of sacred bliss,' and I had not the shadow of a doubt that God for Christ's sake remitted my transgressions. The evidence from that hour, of my adoption into the family of God, was direct and indubitable. Oh, bless the Lord for his renewing grace! Praise God for my soul's release from the captivity of the devil! Hallelujah to the Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world!

> Oh, the rapturous height
> Of that holy delight
> Which I felt in the life-giving blood;
> Of my Saviour possessed
> I was perfectly blessed
> As if filled with the fulness of God."

While rejoicing in the sense of forgiveness, Mrs.

Stewart entered the room, and advancing to her husband, whispered, "If so happy yourself, why don't you exhort these sinners?" Receiving this collateral license; without trepidation, he instantly sprang to his feet, and from a heart warmed by the grace of God, and charged with the glory of a new-born soul, the words of invitation from his lips, fell with power among the people. The Lord was manifestly present. The God of Sabbaoth was in his first message; he was a host in himself from the very beginning. And here the question arises—if every man, from the very day of his conversion, would labor as did the example before us, might not the world be more speedily evangelized? Would not sinners, seeing that religion is not "a cunningly devised fable," but a glorious reality, desire more eagerly the life which is "not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost?" Is not the cause of Christianity susceptible of more injury, ay, is not the progress of the glorious gospel, far more successfully and fatally impeded by the conspicuous lukewarmness and inactivity of professing Christians than by all its enemies? When, with unanimous and resolute concurrence, the sons of men, becoming convinced of the necessity of universal co-labor, come up in solid and irresistible phalanx to the help of the Lord against the mighty powers of darkness, and exhibit the *uniform* of God's military, the boldness and magnanimity of the children of God, then, and not till then, will the "tidings of grace begin to be received into every heart, and

win its joyous, widening way to earth's remotest bound."

Concluding his spiritual salutatory with a familiar chorus, commencing: "I wonder why *old saints* don't sing," and actually inquiring in his mind why the saints of God remained composed and unconcerned, when men and women "without God and without hope in the world," were jostling them at every step, he began to appeal personally to the sinners present. A wealthy and somewhat aristocratic widow was awakened from her lethargy of pride and sensuality, and induced to turn in with the overtures of mercy, and a gentleman who had resorted to this meeting more as pastime than with particular desire for profit, shook with conviction, and hastily retiring to a dark apartment of the house, hid himself from the eye and the attack of the young exhorter. Observing this movement, which betrayed a mental fear, but too much engrossed in pointing the seeking lady to the source of all light, Mr. Stewart dispatched a Baptist sister, to counsel the unhappy truant religiously, and ere a half hour had elapsed, the sentence "God be merciful to me a sinner," was heard in the adjoining room.

Mr. Stewart was one of those, who did with his might what he found to perform. From the date of his powerful conversion, he was characterized by an almost unexampled enthusiasm and zeal for the cause of Christ. He visited his neighbors and acquaintances who were unsaved, and besought them by the atonement, to be instantly in action, ere they were in

the enemy's hand. Inspired with the true apostolic spirit, "he went about doing good," and two weeks subsequent to the prayer meeting recorded, he attended the organization of a Methodist class in Warren. He was a Methodist "out and out," from the moment the peace of God entered his spirit, but, through the influence of Mrs. Stewart, who, though a liberal Presbyterian, was strongly prejudiced against the church of Wesley's institution, he was dissuaded from connecting himself with the class.

Unable to lie supinely on his back, while so much was to be done, he summoned a number of the brethren together, and said: "I conceive that a working laity for these times is as necessary as an effectual ministry. Warren is a valley of dry bones. The professing Christians for the most part *despise the cross*, and if not aroused to a sense of their duty, and induced to discharge it faithfully before God, they will be compelled to endure the shame. It is high time to awake out of sleep. Some, it is to be apprehended, have never yet tasted the good word of life and the heavenly gift, nor been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, else how *could* they stand here all the day idle? They regard sin, it is true, as the worst evil, and the fruitful source of every pang of sorrow that betides humanity, yet they cannot, oh, they cannot enjoy the life and power of godliness! Are they then a peculiar people, zealous of good works? Are they a holy people? My Bible informs me that God requires such votaries: 'Without holiness none shall see the Lord.' Is not the state of

those professors who entertain the form but deny the power, worse than the first? Oh, my brethren, let us be up and doing! let us work while it is called to-day, because the night cometh, and that right speedily, when no man shall work."

This address resulted in the organization of a prayer meeting, which increased in interest and numbers, until scarcely a private house could be obtained that would afford comfortable accommodations to the people who congregated, anxious for a revival of pure and undefiled religion among them. Although Mr. Stewart's efforts were exercised chiefly for the spiritual benefit of the Presbyterians, yet was his heart enlarged toward all the children of God by whatever name they were distinguished; or if they claimed no name, wherever the bound of their habitation were fixed. Eventually, for greater convenience, the meetings of which he was conductor were carried to the court-house, and thither the pastors of both congregations were soon attracted. In this place, "there came a sound as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Christians were built up in their most holy faith, and nearly two hundred souls professed to find "the pearl of great price" in a few weeks, and connected themselves with the various sects who still continued to assemble statedly in the spacious public edifice. During the day, sinners were here convicted or acquitted according as the imperfect judgment of human intellect designated; during the evening, sinners were pardoned, without regard to

the multitude or magnitude of their crimes, on condition that their future service be given Him against whom the offences had been committed. And now professors generally began to comprehend the vitality of religion, and its experimental operations on the heart. The joy which Mr. Stewart experienced, at and subsequent to his conversion, was too profound and permanent to admit of a single doubt as to the genuineness of the work. The change in his desires, and the character of his impulses and emotions were unmistakable evidences that he had "passed from death unto life." These could not be the effect of merely natural causes. His peace was that which "passeth understanding;" his "joy unspeakable and full of glory." The inclination of his nature was thoroughly transformed. He loved, served, and endeavored to edify God's spiritual kingdom, because he felt that Christ had lived and died to prove the value of his immortal soul. He abhorred sin, because it had been the prolific seed of death, and all our woe, and he loved Jesus Christ, because he condescended to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, by receiving the chastisement of our peace, and healing us by his stripes. He saw the Son of God humbled that he might be exalted; impoverished that he might be enriched; bound that he might be liberated from the thraldom of sin; punished that he might be spared; cursed that he might be blessed; despised and trodden under foot of men that he might be exalted "to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away;" condemned to

die the most shameful death, that he might live forever. He would pause in the midst of his secular occupation and think upon these things, until lost in wonder, love, and praise, at the numerous and great mercies of God to one so totally meritless of the least token of his divine regard. He saw mercies borne to the thankless inhabitants of earth on every moment of time, and he prayed that they might, at least from his individual case, convey the welcome intelligence to Heaven of soul and body presented a living sacrifice to the giver of all good; which he understood by Paul's epistle to the Romans was but a "reasonable service." When abroad in the green fields and verdure-clad forests, all things in the miracles of nature, declared the hand that made them was divine. He saw that no power save that of Omnipotence could "cover the earth with grass for the cattle, and herbs for the service of man;" he was convinced that the gigantic trees bowed their heads alone in subjection to "him that walketh upon the wings of the wind;" and all conspired to enforce and demonstrate conclusively, the holy inspiration and origin of the Bible. In contemplation of himself, he felt that man was the crowning piece of God's architecture! He was convinced of this, from his superior endowments, by his capacity for intellectual attainment, and above all, by the infinite price of his redemption!

Is it not strange that men, comprehending the theory of astronomy, with its wonderful arrangement of solar system and siderial territories; sitting,

as it were, above the planets, measuring the magnitude of the stars, and explaining all phenomena connected with our earth, with consistent argument; is it not strange that such philosophers discover in the economy of this sublime structure, a tract of imperfection upon which to base a single doubt of the supreme and eternal existence of a great creative Power?

Mr. Stewart studiously viewed the works of creation and redemption, and they stood palpably before his mind's eye, as wonders peculiar to the power of God. There was an obviously inseparable affinity between them; and he felt that in redemption was a greater expression of God's love to man, than in all the other manifestations of his regard which had ever been, or ever could be, made to the world. In reflecting upon the language of the Apostle John, it seemed evident that one soul outweighed in value the vastness of creation: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might have life through him." Moreover, every day's observation proved "the carnal mind enmity against God," and not subject to the law of God, whose love had been so wonderfully manifested to fallen man. This filled him with solicitude for the dying multitude around him, particularly as he read in connection with it, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live: For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God: And

if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." Rejoicing in happy possession of the earnest of that weight of glory which is to be more exceeding and *eternal*, Mr. Stewart could not mingle with those who were not thus blessed, and continue silent on the all important subject. His soul went out in strong desire for the very beggars whom he encountered in the street, and he was sure to drop a word for Christ in the heart, as he deposited a mite in the hand of indigence. Wherever he travelled, salvation through the Crucified began to be the all absorbing theme. He controverted the Baptist clergy concerning "immersion," and the Presbyterian concerning "election," in the spirit of love; urging his conviction that neither was in any way calculated to promote the salvation of souls, and that through the inspiration of the Spirit he was led to declare a free pardon to all who would seek for it in simple faith in Christ. At length the discussion on predestination became general; a number of the brethren of the respective creeds joined, and a searching of the Scriptures, such as resulted in benefit to all who engaged therein, ensued. The principal argument which the Arminian fraternity adduced was this: "The Holy Spirit shows all unforgiven men that they are in jeopardy every hour. The elect *must* be saved, and consequently *cannot* be in peril. Therefore, the Holy Ghost must teach falsely, which is incompatible with his character."

This controversy resulted in the renunciation of unconditional election by Rev. Adam Bentley, pastor

of the Baptist church, and *one hundred and twenty-five* of his parishioners. Mr. Stewart, who possessed some natural logical abilities and acuteness, a good command of language, and enjoyed a spirited debate, was in an agreeable element among these redoubtable polemics. He was impatient to reply to his opponent, and each response to his remarks only served to elicit a settling rejoinder. In his journal concerning this, he writes:—

"I enjoyed the controversy vastly. Every attempt of the Calvinists to support election, established me more firmly in my own opinions. To these examinations of Scripture import, in Warren, I am indebted measurably for much early light upon many abstruse passages of the Bible." When he encountered a problematical sentence in the Old or New Testament, he labored over it with as much zeal, as with the stumps in his clearing-land, and never ceased grappling, until they were made plain before him and stored carefully away in the treasury of his own mind. He was no less active in his labors than in his studies. He was unsurpassed in promptness of action and ardency of performance. Like Peter and Andrew, he *straightway* left his temporal engagements and following the Saviour willingly, was ever ready to do his needy fellow-creatures the good that lay in his power. Though, during several years which followed, he continued to labor in the factory, and upon his little tract of ground, yet was the image of the blessed Redeemer ever before his eyes; his predominant desire was the salvation of mankind,

and to this glorious end was he always prepared to lay down his mechanical or agricultural implements and sound the trump of alarm among the sleeping inhabitants of Nineveh. In the stanzas of Montgomery he was wont to sing:—

"Come to Calvary's holy mountain,
Sinners ruined by the fall;
Here a pure and healing fountain
Flows to every thirsty soul;
In a full perpetual tide,
Opened when the Saviour died.

"Come in sorrow and contrition,
Wounded, impotent, and blind;
Here the guilty free remission,
Here the lost a refuge find;
Health this fountain will restore,
He that drinks need thirst no more."

CHAPTER III.

FROM HIS FIRST SPEAKING IN PUBLIC TILL APPOINTED CLASS-LEADER.

Invited to preach—Goes to camp-meeting at Braceville—Dissatisfied among the Presbyterians—Takes Mrs. Stewart to Smithfield camp-meeting—Exhorts on a stump—They connect themselves with the Methodists—Advice of Joseph Curtis—Scheme to increase their numbers—Extract from journal—Ballast—Pleasing God.

A FEW months after Mr. Stewart's conversion, he was solicited to go into the country, a few miles distant, and *preach*. Securing a verbal privilege from the authorities of the church, he went forth to discharge that which he deemed was his duty, and in the dwelling-house of Mr. Abram Anderson, in Trumbull County, Ohio, he preached his first sermon from—"He now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Mr. Anderson, four sons, and eighteen individuals who had gathered from the vicinity, dated their conviction of sin from that discourse. In May of 1821, Mr. Stewart attended a camp-meeting near Braceville, where he listened to able and powerful sermons from Revs. Alfred Bronson, William Sweyzey, and James McMahn. The zeal,

faith, and vigorous effort, everywhere in exercise, were the manifestations of earnestness and sincerity that attracted his attention, and riveted his sympathies to the Methodists. These religious exertions were followed by exhibitions of God's favor and power: the spirit of Christ was abundantly poured out upon the people, and scores of new-born souls, rejoiced with scores of Christians, recently cleansed from all sin by the blessing of sanctification.

Upon his return to Warren, he declared his discontent in remaining among the Presbyterians, to Mrs. Stewart; but before proceeding to take any step, he invited his wife to accompany him to a second meeting, which was to be held during the following August. Mrs. Stewart had requested her husband to remain with the Presbyterians one year; assuring him if dissatisfied at its termination, that she would go with him and attach herself to Methodism and its interests. She consented to go to the camp-meeting. After a week had been passed in the beautiful grove, the morning of the adjournment arrived. Mr. Stewart had been heartily engaged from the commencement to the close of the meeting; singing, praying, and exhorting in unwearied labors for the conversion of sinners. His face beamed with a light almost unearthly, his eyes sparkled with holy brilliancy, and he scarcely seemed conscious of presence in or absence from the body. The dawn of Saturday was clear, warm, and beautiful. The spot in which the tents were pitched, was one of those fine oak wood forests, peculiar to Ohio. Ma-

jestic trees, whose gigantic and interwoven limbs defended from the blinding rays of the summer sun, like an outspread canopy, stood as great friendly sentinels in close proximity. The white tents, in pure contrast with the thick verdure, the soft wind sighing among the branches, and the sweet place, vocal with the music of joyous birds, added to the interest and solemnity, breathed from every glad soul exulting in the saving grace of a living Saviour.

A deep stream of clear, cold, exhilarating water was adjacent, along which were clusters of wild grape-vines, and whose banks were redolent of the perfume of many flowers. The last sermon had been delivered, the last opportunity for the return of prodigals offered, and preparations for departure were being made. The last echo of the long horn had died away among the hills, and the parting hand must now be extended to those ministers whose burning words had cheered the faint, encouraged the weak, edified the strong, and besought the erring to return. With moistened eyes, the local and itinerant preachers ranged themselves in a double line, in front of "the stand," and the weeping sisters and sad brethren passed between, receiving a final blessing. Only those who have witnessed this solemn performance at the breaking up of a camp-meeting, can imagine the sadness and reluctance with which it is attended. The very inanimate objects around you, with whose figures and appearance you have become familiar, seem to assume the look of regret, and the waving branches above seem to sigh a

mournful adieu to the departing. Not unfrequently, sobs are heard escaping from a sister recently emerged from nature's darkness, as she feels the friendly pressure of that hand which has led her to the altar of prayer, where spiritual light first dawned upon the soul; then a shout of "Glory to God!" from an aged brother whose weakening tones suggest the thought, that before another similar privilege is afforded, he may *see* Jesus whom he has tried to follow in lowliness of heart for many, many years. Finally, perhaps, a unanimous "Hallelujah!" makes the forest aisles echo and the hills reverberate; nature verily seeming to unite in the shout with willing and glad concurrence, as the body proceeds to wend around the circle in front of the tents, "lustily singing" the good old chorus:—

"We'll march around Jerusalem
When we arrive at home."

These final proceedings were unusually impressive upon the occasion of Mrs. Stewart's presence at Smithfield. To her liberal mind, now that prejudice was dethroned, the novelty was interesting, the fervor admirable, and the whole scene devotional. As she stood at the entrance of one of the tents, looking upon the spectacle described, now smiling at some odd ejaculation of pious rapture, anon dropping a sympathetic tear with those who were separating, her attention was drawn to a spot in a remote section of the ground where a crowd had congregated around a speaker. She advanced to discover the cause of

the excitement and learn the subject which was of so much interest at that late hour. Imagine her surprise when she perceived her arduous spouse, elevated upon a stump, exhorting the lost sheep of the house of Israel, with emphasis and almost vehemence, to return now, to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, lest another opportunity might never favor them. Satan suggested "impropriety," and she was inclined to steal up behind him, twitch his coat, and subject him to censure, but calmly regarding him a moment, she seated herself upon a rustic bench and responded "Amen" to every sentiment uttered by his truth-inspired lips. A score, moved by the graphic portraits of a blissful heaven and a burning hell, painted in the glowing language of the animated exhorter, "fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them."

While thus engaged, an instrument in the hands of God of turning many to repentance, such exclamations as the following were heard among the crowd, composing his miscellaneous audience: "That young Stewart is an extraordinary man!" "Of limited education, but possessing a sharp penetration of mind and a keen comprehension of human nature." "A detached, but really vivid and eloquent delineation of Heaven!" "He seems to speak without thought!" "Listen to that picture of Emmaus!" "Now he is with the thief on the cross! See the effect upon the people, they are crying for mercy!" "Power and conviction attend his words!"

He quotes from Watts:—

"Oh, for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak."

"Not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and with power," did Mr. Stewart thus exhibit the indubitable foreshadowing of great usefulness.

"Thomas, you are no Presbyterian, I release you from my claim upon you as such," was his wife's salutation as she grasped his hand after the exhortation; "unite with this excellent sect, so alive to the eternal interests of their friends; and if the great Head of the church have pulpit labor for you, I'll strive to hold up your hands. Wherever you go, by the grace of God strengthening me, I'll accompany you." Repairing to Rev. Joseph Curtis, the pastor of the body with which his name was enrolled, Mr. Stewart asked a written transfer to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Not surprised at this anticipated demand, Mr. Curtis wrote the certificate, and delivering it, gave the recipient wise and salutary counsel, which was treasured through twenty years of his after life.

"You have bravely and honestly defended your creed," said that good man; "still more firmly arm yourself with the panoply of God in defence of his glorious kingdom. Take the breastplate of righteousness, have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, above all take the shield of

faith wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. I rejoice in the knowledge that your desires are after a larger measure of the Holy Spirit; watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. Never stop to argue with the Devil; recollect you are very near him, when it is possible to converse, and he never flees till resisted! Part with your heart's blood rather than that zeal for which you are already characterized. May God's blessing attend you and his omnipotence support you in every effort for the advancement of the cause of Christ, and in every trial sent for the test of your faith. Let me hear how you dispose of yourself. *Please inform Mrs. Stewart that I shall be ready to present a similar scrip to her upon appeal!*"

Conscious of *her* confirmed Calvinistic faith, the reverend gentleman had repeated the last sentence slowly and in a tone which savored of irony; betraying no disrespect or ill feeling, however. Conceive of his blank astonishment, when, the following day, Mrs. Stewart presented herself before him, "appealing for a similar scrip."

In eighteen months, the Methodists in Warren had only increased their membership by seven names, making a total of seventeen, but this, considering the almost irresistible current of opposing influence, was well! There still continued to exist a strong prejudice against them, greatly obstructing their advancement and usefulness. They were despised and ridiculed on account of their "clamor," and excitable propensities in worship. They were

represented as "a poverty-stricken sect," and this, it was alleged, could never be improved; because if a rich man joined them, the traveling preachers soon "eat him out of house and home." Irreputable and feeble as this denomination was, Mr. and Mrs. Stewart gave their hand, heart, and life, voluntarily to its interests, and lifting their voices to Jeshurun's God, they prayed and wrestled mightily for the speedy visitation of the Holy Spirit among the people, that their numbers might be enlarged by hundreds of the thoroughly converted, who should adorn the doctrines of their profession and be eternally saved. A number of these despised Wesleyans assembled and concerted a plan by which wanderers might "be brought in from the highways and hedges and compelled to take of the supper," spread by the Saviour for all who come unto God by Him. They resolved to single out an irreligious individual of the community, and with united heart and unswerving faith, appeal to a throne of mercy in his behalf. The kingdom of heaven, which "suffereth violence," was in the present instance submissive to force; each and every man and woman thus designated and borne up on the wings of faith, was speedily rescued from the net of the evil one and brought to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Conversing on their manner of operation in multiplying their forces and strengthening their stakes, Mrs. Stewart one evening informed a young man with whom she was intimately acquainted, that he

was selected as the next subject. He was strictly moral in his character, but disposed to be somewhat sacrilegious. He consented, however, to this pious solicitude and earnest labor in his behalf, but expressed a fear that success in his case was doubtful. "With God all things are possible." Although this man had lived twenty-eight years in sinfulness, in less than a fortnight, he was happily converted to God, and subsequently appointed class leader. Thus did the little band unite and work in the vineyard of the Lord. And by these instruments, though of moderate literary attainments and slight education, did God speed the glorious Christian reformation in Warren, despite the stubborn barriers against which they had to contend.

Mr. Stewart's journal of this date, runs: "I have joined the Methodists; I feel they are a help to me and I am determined to strive to help them. If any people upon earth, they are, assuredly, 'God's husbandry'—they are 'laborers together with God.' Methodism *is* Christianity in earnest. Its advocates are Bible saints; *the* people spoken of by Malachi, 'who fear the Lord and speak often one to another and keep a book of remembrance for them that think upon God's name.' Is not this like to our blessed means of grace, the class-meeting; where 'the strong bear the infirmities of the weak'—assisting by personal experience and aiding by appropriate advice? This church is an honor to me, I feel exalted by my connection with it.

"Help us to help each other, Lord,
Each other's cross to bear;
Let each his friendly aid afford
And feel his brother's care.

"Help us to build each other up,
Our little stock improve,
Increase our faith, confirm our hope,
And perfect us in love.

"I carry high sail sometimes, consequently am in more imminent danger of capsizing. I also encounter trials, *these serve me as ballast!* Occasionally I get on 'enchanted ground.' 'God, save me from lying on the sofa of inactivity and falling asleep in the arbor!'"

Trials as ballast! How much greater advancement might be made in divine life, were Christians generally thus to receive them! Instead of subsiding into gloom and despondency when adversity or affliction falls upon the child of God, how much better to remember that "in the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Christ peace;" and the kind request, "cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you," and improve by trial, even as He "who was wounded for our transgressions," became "perfect through suffering."

There is nothing perhaps more displeasing to God than for his professed followers to misimprove by providences; nothing more gratifying than "prayer without ceasing and in all things thanksgiving." It is a privilege to live, seeing we have, in the noble object of *pleasing* God, something worth living for. It is sometimes the case that individuals are deprived

of the principal objects of their affection: those for whom they lived. They feel as if their work had been suddenly taken out of their hands; they have nothing to occupy their thoughts, engage their affections, or enlist their energies. They are most unhappy. But let them give themselves *unreservedly* to God, and at once the scene changes; all is bright and blessed. They have occupation enough for their active minds, objects enough in their newly found Father and all his dear children for their warmest affections, and room enough for all their energies. There are no more dull days for them now! no more twilight hours, spent in pensive musings! no more time lost in pitying self and nourishing grief. New courage is breathed into the soul; new hopes, new desires! The joy of the Lord is their strength; the double joy of loving God and believing his love in return. It is as if one who before dragged heavily along, had suddenly found wings! In making it the one great object of life to please God, something satisfactory is found!

Jesus, I bless thy gracious power,
  And all within me shouts thy name;
Thy name let every soul adore,
  Thy power let every tongue proclaim!
Thy grace let every sinner know,
And find in thee their heaven below.

CHAPTER IV.

LABORS IN OHIO.

Mr. McMahn preaches from "the word of the Devil"—A good congregation—Rev. Dennis Goddard—Sketches from Mr. Stewart's diary—His class at Weathersfield—Precept and example—Studies—Gifts and graces—Attack against his character—His labors not in vain—Government of children—Anecdote—Mr. Stewart removes to Windsor—Troubles—Triumphs—Visits Burlington—Mrs. Stewart at Mr. Hall's—Parkman—Return to New Jersey—Anecdote.

THE Methodist congregation in Warren, at this time, was exceedingly small, but few outside of the limited membership condescending to patronize the little band. Those who came were principally actuated by motives of curiosity "to see some shouting done," or circulate exaggerated reports of "the cant and gymnastics." The charge had been adopted by the Youngstown Circuit, and it had been made a regular two weeks' preaching appointment, still no unusual interest was shown, either by the professing or non-professing portion of the community. Had not the handful of its adherents been of the most persevering, hopeful, energetic character, the heart of Rev. James McMahn, the preacher in charge of

the circuit, must have become discouraged. Observing the implicit, unswerving faith of the little flock, he continued to appear statedly and expound the word of God, with the ability which God gave, to an eager and soul-thirsty people. At the dismission of one of these meetings, Mr. McMahn, indulging the hope that novelty would attract a class whom substantial, ordinary sermonizing failed to convene, made the following enunciation: "Since the transgressors of this vicinity refuse to assemble within these precincts to hear me preach from the word of God, I will discourse upon my succeeding visit to this town, from the words of the Devil." Four weeks subsequently, the court-house was crowded to repletion, and Mr. McMahn, making his way with some difficulty through the aisle, ascended the platform, and, after a feeling and eloquent prayer, announced, as a text, the words of the tempter to Eve in the garden of Paradise, "Thou shalt not surely die." The sermon was an able one. The speaker always abounding in striking comparison and sublime imagery, enlisted the mute attention of his audience, and carried with him its almost breathless sympathies. Waxing earnest, his heart's aspirations went out in glowing language, and touching sentiments, especially adapted for the young in his presence. He portrayed the cunning and subtility of the father of lies, and appealed to those far from God by wicked works for an individual response to this question: as often as convicted of natural corruption and condemning depravity, when almost

persuaded to surrender your weapons of rebellion and battle against the reign of the Lord of Glory no more, have you not been advised by a soft, flattering voice to postpone a life of allegiance to the Redeemer, and a preparation for an eternal residence with his glorified worshippers—and been assured of a sufficient allotment of time for spiritual enjoyment after the trial of sinful pleasures for a season? In this, is involved the fatal sentiment that robbed the world of happiness, destroyed man's blissful content, and endowed him with susceptibility of sin. "Thou shalt not surely die!"

Mr. McMahn's address, delivery, gesticulation, and sermon, were the subject of conversation by all classes during the next month, and subsequently he never failed to have large and respectable congregations.

Rev. Dennis Goddard was his successor. Although advanced in years, he was a stirring and active laborer in the vineyard of his master. He had "borne the burden and heat of the day," and now, in life's evening, with uncomplaining industry, chose to retain his position on the walls of Zion and sound his long-cherished gospel trump. The theme of every sermon was Christ Jesus and him crucified, and he could not feel contentment in his heart while there was a single soldier attached to Immanuel's army who was not employed in active service. Mr. Stewart formed a just estimate of Mr. Goddard's moral and intellectual worth, and reverenced him as a father. From this venerable man, he learned much of the economy and administration of Method-

ism, and received from his lips many lessons of truth and wisdom, which he never forgot. To the end of his life, he was accustomed to speak of him with esteem and affection. His diary here says: "That man of constant and unremitting action, Mr. Goddard, has established a class at Weathersfield, and commissioned me to preside over it. This responsibility seems almost too great for one of my inexperience and inability. Oh, I feel my own ignorance and sinfulness most sensibly, but I repose in him whose life was one of wisdom and whose name was 'Salvation.'

"Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.

"I cannot arise in my own strength to counsel, advise, and administer reproof; there are yet many heights and depths of the divine life for me to explore. Oh, that I may be aided from on high in all my efforts to discharge my religious duties!" To this field of labor, which was distant five miles, Mr. Stewart invariably walked, sometimes accompanied by his wife, and occasionally by one or more of the brethren and sisters of Warren. When thus escorted, he returned after leading his class; when alone, the kind friends prevailed on him to remain till morning, lest the wolves, which abounded in the woods through which he had to pass, fall upon and devour him. There were fifteen names upon his class-book. Although for the most part a united and sincere

company, who earnestly sought to walk in the light of holiness, and emulate the great Exemplar, Mr. Stewart was occasionally called upon to arbitrate between parties, disputing upon matters of trivial importance. At one time, he was apprehensive that a misunderstanding between two of the sisters would result in the disbanding of this little society. Five of the class refused to attend, and requested the withdrawal of their names. With commendable judgment and perseverance, their leader, zealous for the cause of Christ, went from one to the other in the spirit of love, beseeching the offended "to bear the infirmities of the weak," and not strive altogether "to please themselves," and quoting St. Paul to the Romans: "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification," and, in the language of the apostle, exhorting them to be "likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; in lowliness of mind each esteeming other better than themselves." The spirit of the good leader was rejoiced to find his subordinates tractable and consistent; obtaining a promise from each individual connected with the unpleasant occurrence, that he would forget and forgive. Mr. Stewart continued to appear punctually in Weathersfield on the evening appointed, and he had the satisfaction of again beholding the estranged parties knit together in the closest and warmest bonds of genuine, forbearing, Christian affection. What may not perseverance and love, united with the fervent, effectual prayer of faith, achieve? In a little village called

Salt Springs, to which Mr. Stewart was deputed by the higher authority of the church, many spirits became the subjects of religious influence, and were brought to "a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus." And thus did this man of God strive to be useful in every possible way, until licensed to exhort in the year 1822 by Rev. Charles Elliott, preacher in charge of Mahoning Circuit. Then commenced a series of labors equivalent to that of many itinerants of the present time. After being employed all or part of the day in discharge of the onerous toils of spindle and loom, he was accustomed to pass several hours in visiting, conversing, encouraging, instructing in divine things, exhorting to increased diligence, warning of conformity to the world, and insisting on the necessity of Christians seeking that holiness of heart or undivided consecration of self, "without which none shall see the Lord." He endeavored also to teach by a wholesome example as well as precept, the true way of life, strove assiduously to let his light shine before men and exhibit to their view an example of unfeigned piety and virtue. He was unhappy if it were possible to retrospect a day in which he had not essayed to advance the interests of the spiritual kingdom established by Christ. In public and in private, at home and abroad, he ceased not to place before his eyes this, the most important of all designs. Whatever embarrassment Mr. Stewart had labored under for lack of educational opportunities previously, he now was favored; for the fortunate day in which it

might literally be declared, "of making many books there is no end," was dawning; literature of all classes was cheapening, and the standard of education was rising. His resources were improving and he had time which could be devoted to study. He did not, however, aspire to the position of a scholar, much less to assume the air and superior conversations of such, but to possess some actual knowledge, to acquire some ennobling sentiments that his mind might feed upon and grow stronger. He made it a rule to place in his coat-pocket a volume, when setting off to fill an appointment a few miles away, and committed its contents to memory as he plodded over the fields or through the forests. He gave earnest attention to the English language, made himself acquainted with grammar, and was careful to correct his pronunciation or misapplication of words. The keenness of his perception, and tenacity of his memory were surprising, and the wonderful facility with which he acquired Biblical lore and commanded appropriate passages was a still greater source of astonishment. In exhortation he was plain, pointed, and practical; he paid but little regard to popular or admired styles, but spoke, trusting in divine direction, as moved by the Holy Ghost. He made known his requests in prayer as the Spirit gave him utterance, and while he supplicated a Throne of grace with the spirit, he possessed the understanding also. His words flowed spontaneously and without premeditation, yet were well adapted to the occasion. While he was daily growing in

grace and in the knowledge of the truth, while his sole object in living, was the honor and glory of his Creator and Redeemer, he was suddenly plunged into one of those fearful ordeals, through which the saints of God are frequently called to pass, but from which, if resolute in maintaining Christian integrity, and constant in waiting upon the Author of faith, they invariably emerge like gold purified in the furnace.

A charge was preferred against him by a brother for improper conduct in a private house, in which he had held a meeting the same evening of the alleged impropriety. The accusation was false, as the adversary could assist the accuser to concoct, and so ridiculously absurd and in such palpable antagonism to Mr. Stewart's exalted reputation, that he scarcely deigned to listen to the rumor which reached his ears.

The enviable height of the pedestal upon which he stood, however, incited *a party* to attempt its demolition. Such vicious attacks, aiming at the root of a man's religious character, designed to extinguish his usefulness, impede his spiritual progress, and clog the wheels of Christianity, though failing to accomplish the result intended, sometimes to a certain extent, sully the fair name of the victim, blemish his reputation and cause a degree of mortification which discourages the guiltless heart, and perhaps induces despair of the ultimate good, which, under other circumstances, he hoped to have been instrumental in performing. In the present case it

was not so. Although Mr. Stewart's spirits were depressed by the malignant attack, the sin of the unconscionable perpetrators weighed more heavily upon him than the fear of stigma that might attach to himself. He continued to pursue the even tenor of his way, like the Hebrews in the fire, unscathed by the consuming element. His congregations increased, his faith in Abram's God was strengthened, and his wholesome influence was unabated. It was not an uncommon thing for him to superintend a meeting of some description each night in the month, and upon these occasions, he would frequently sing, pray, and exhort, till articulation in an audible tone was impracticable. The result of these abundant labors was a presentation of ten or twelve probationers to the pastor at every periodical visitation. What was the secret of his success? He lived in the spirit of prayer; whatever employments engaged his attention, this spirit was manifested through them all. When journeying to the small settlements, contiguous to Warren, for the purpose of holding meetings, he set out not to see if God *would* pour out a blessing and display his pleasure and power in the conviction and conversion of sinners, but expecting the uninterrupted presence of Deity, and assured by his faith in God that a revival of pure and undefiled religion would positively be witnessed in these places. He "held the mystery of faith in a pure conscience." He constantly stirred up the pure minds of his brethren to remember that the word preached would not profit, unless mixed with

faith in them that heard it, and assured them by the affirmation of Peter, that "the prayer of faith should save any who have committed sins so that they be forgiven him." He still pursued his daily avocation, anticipated every necessity of her who blest his humble dwelling with her encouraging smiles, and loved and watched over his tender offspring with all the kindling affection of the paternal heart. In the exercise of parental discipline he depended on the efficacy of appeals to sense of right and wrong, employed persuasion rather than rigorous measures with his children, endeavored with unwearying assiduity to counteract the sinful propensities of their natures and cultivate their amiable traits. Upon one occasion, after an aggravated offence of his son James, a lad of about ten years, he deemed the punishment of the rod necessary for his benefit and reformation. He procured the instrument but could not perform the act of flagellation. Approaching his wife he whispered: "If you can use this article which I hold in my hand, I hope you will do it, I can only plead with the rebellious, I cannot make it my province to punish." With similar emotions, the sinners around him were regarded. He saw them exposed to the wrath of a justly offended Father, and he could not restrain importuning them by the mercies of God, "to give their wanderings o'er." His plan of government proved superior; his heart was overjoyed to see the family with which God had blessed him, early bow in humble contrition at the feet of Jesus Christ, and

made to exult in evidence of pardon through his cleansing blood.

Were a proper line of conduct pursued in the discipline and education of children, how few profligate sons and daughters, how few broken-hearted parents would be found. Neglect of early religious training, connected with affectionate restraint, is doubtless the ruin of millions. Many parents are too authoritative and severe in their mode of exacting obedience, while others rush into the extreme of foolish fondness, in reality maintaining no government at all. In the former case, home becomes the object of dislike; in the latter, the half-grown man is seen to usurp the authority of the parent, and treat his power with as little respect as if its mandates were unimportant as the wind that murmurs in the grove or plays sportively on the rippling waters. "It is not parental fondness nor parental authority taken separately that can produce a beneficial effect. A father may be as fond of his children as it is possible for him to be, and his offspring be disobedient and rebellious; he may be as authoritative as the Grand Turk, and his children despise and plot rebellion against him. But let parental authority be tempered with fatherly affection, and let the reins of discipline be steadily held by this powerful but affectionate hand, and then shall the pleasure of God prosper, then shall he give his blessing 'even life forevermore.'"

At the expiration of seven years' residence in Warren, Mr. Stewart was solicited to come to Wind-

sor and conduct an extensive woollen factory, "just completed and furnished with all the recently invented and improved orders of mechanism and intricate machinery." He removed to this town, which was twenty-five miles distant, in the spring of 1823, leaving Mrs. Stewart's mother with her only sister, the wife of Mr. Samuel Elwell. To Windsor, the intelligence of his alleged "impropriety" had preceded him and been diffused among those less acquainted with his true piety, with accumulated virulence. He was proscribed the use of the church, "lest he injure the cause of Methodism now prospering there," and was advised not to exhort in the neighborhood. But it was impossible for him to hush the spirit within, continually groaning for the salvation of his fellow creatures. He remembered that his Exemplar came to "his own, and his own received him not," that he was despised and rejected of men, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," that he declared with agony: "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death;" yet Christ pressed on and established a glorious kingdom and completed the redemption of the world despite the interposing barriers and his violent enemies. Mr. Stewart was longing to cry, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and in his emergency he consulted one of the brethren who avowed his readiness to assist him in any practicable way. At length a private house was secured, and here upon the occasion of his first appearance, the apartments were found inadequate

to the comfortable accommodation of the crowd that assembled. Subsequently, the religious services were conducted in barns, carpenter shops, and open fields in summer, and during the winter months the persecuted child of God took his stand behind a chair in the commodious farm-house kitchen of Mr. George Phelps, who, with his wife and a score in addition, were soon brought to a saving knowledge of the truths of the gospel, and their names handed over to the church in the beautiful spirit of a "peace offering." The discourses delivered in these places, though he seldom announced the location of his text, could not be too emphatically termed *sermons;* they were regularly arranged, and addressed directly to the consciences of the people; invariably adapted and intended to expose the evil of sin and the insufficiency of a mere formal religion, in contradistinction to that sincere, spiritual worship which God delights to smile upon and accept, while he urged Christians to the faithful discharge of every duty and to the just appreciation of every blessed privilege, that they might go on from justification to sanctification and be in perfect peace with Christ the Lord. These constituted the staple of his preaching; and practical attention to them all was enforced by solemn references to their value in life and in death, while the strictness and impartiality of the judgment were enforced.

Mr. Stewart was tall and well proportioned; he had a frank, generous countenance, and was graceful in every gesture and movement of his body. His

voice was soft and agreeable but of immense compass, which he did not fear to exercise to its utmost capacity. He abounded in anecdote which he had a peculiar faculty for appropriating and relating impressively. His originality and quaintness commanded general and riveted attention. He speedily became popular, and before the expiration of twelve months his reputation was established, the entire body of the church was conciliated, and he was universally respected and admired. Thus satisfactorily under the all wise guidance of God, passed the two years' residence in Windsor.

One evening in the early part of May, 1824, as he and his wife were lingering around the tea-table, surrounded by their four children, Mr. Stewart suddenly started from the seat where he was sitting in silent thought, and said to his wife, "I must go to the east and visit my relatives!" She answered: "Thomas, you are not certainly in earnest." "Yes, I am; I must go and warn them to flee from the wrath to come." "Is not this an impulse which will soon subside?" "I have thought of it seriously during several months, but it seemed impossible. To-day I have received a communication from the proprietors of Parkman Mills, asking my services in Parkman, next spring. I can settle my family snugly in Warren, with the Elwells, and be absent two months the coming fall."

"Are there no effective ministers of the Gospel in New Jersey?" "There are, it is true. Yet I am positive my father and sisters do not attend upon the

means of grace with any degree of profit or advantage. This is perceptible from the worldly tenor of their letters. *If I do not go, their blood will be on my skirts;* otherwise, I feel that God will make me an honored instrument, in his hands, of my dear old father's conversion. I must go and preach to them, and pray with them, and labor for them; then, if they die unprepared for an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they will alone be compelled to bear the burden of their neglect of duty, and I am acquitted."

"You know your duty. I have never opposed you in anything appertaining to religious impulses; I shall not now, though our good Father knows how desolate I shall feel when you shall be four hundred miles away. But he will watch over me and the children, and we will pray that your journey may be free from accident, successful and expeditious. Nay, if your destination were the remotest island of the sea, for Christ's sake I would be willing to sacrifice all things and all friends, to accompany you thither, in order to render those domestic services which it should be a wife's pleasure to perform." Tears filled the husband's eyes, and joyous pulsations throbbed in his heart at the recollection of his goodly heritage, his lovely wife the gift of God's providence, and of "the olive plants around his table."

The first of November found Mr. and Mrs. Stewart in Warren; the latter comfortably ensconced with her mother and sister upon Mr. Elwell's farm, the

former awaiting the conclusion of requisite preparations to travel over the mountains. On the tenth of the month, he set out upon his eastern expedition and arrived at Burlington the 24th, after an absence of twelve years. He received the most cordial welcome from his relatives and acquaintances, and the extreme kindness of his mother, who acknowledged her injustice to him in his youth, and expressed sorrow for her severity and unkindness, dispelled every unpleasant thought of the past, and elicited the warmest prayers of his forgiving heart for her temporal happiness, and concern for her spiritual prosperity.

He remained in Burlington two months, preaching almost every evening, in school-house, private house, or shop. On these occasions, the affectionate and fervent manner in which he addressed the unregenerate, was an effectual proof of his solicitude for their eternal welfare.

He saw the difficulties of his situation in appealing personally to the individual members of his own family, but he had pondered upon and weighed fully these crosses before leaving Ohio, and after traveling several hundred miles with this express purpose, no barrier should now deter him from its execution. His father still adhered tenaciously to "apostolic succession" and "baptismal regeneration," and he was conscious that upon these points he was sensitive and vulnerable; nevertheless, he sought opportunities and discharged conscientiously what he felt persuaded was his duty. The earnest and constrain-

ing manner in which he pleaded the cause of experimental piety, the conspicuous effort to avoid rebuking while he entreated his father to seek the direct witness of the Holy Spirit, and the heart-felt delight consequent upon the indisputable evidence of celestial adoption; the discovery of his son's admirable mixture of discretion and zeal, solemnity and amiability, all conspired to melt down the calloused heart of the aged man and impress it with the necessity of living in the constant fear of God and devotion to his service. And he solemnly covenanted and commenced instantly "the working out of his own salvation with fear and trembling," to the end that he might be "blameless and harmless, a son of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom he might shine as a light in the world; that he might be able to rejoice in the day of Christ, not having run in vain, neither labored in vain."

With respect to the others of the household, he was careful to choose opportune occasions of conversing with them upon sacred subjects, and his compassion was equally abundant toward the immoral and profane laborers employed upon the farm; a class whose condition he considered the most wretched. Regarding the wicked as poor beyond comparison, he gladly undertook any labor that might conduce to their acquisition of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." And he had the gratification of seeing success attend his efforts. The moral aspect of the farm was changed during his sojourn among

its denizens, and he returned to Ohio laden with the thanks and blessings of many sincere, grateful and loving hearts, who ever afterward referred to this visit as a dispensation of God's mercy through a divinely commissioned messenger.

A week after his departure from Warren, Mrs. Stewart was waited upon by Mr. James Hall, who had recently consigned his companion to the grave, and solicited to assume the functions of housekeeper during the irksome period of her husband's absence. The difficulty of a proper performance of the devolving duties of such an office, monopolized as her time must be, to a great extent, with a young family, was suggested to the widower, who nevertheless insisted upon the migration of the whole corps to his farm-house, where, he assured her, were spacious rooms and wholesome aliment, in which and with which, the children might thrive almost spontaneously! Thus petitioned, she gathered her little treasures together, and equipping them, was soon *en route* for the good farmer's domicil, where were passed industriously and pleasantly the weary hours, until the return of him upon whom the richest treasures of her heart were bestowed.

In 1826, we find Mr. Stewart in the Parkman factory, laboring for the support of his interesting family during the day, for the extension of Christ's general family during the evening. It was his custom to keep some Scriptural or educational book convenient to him, and as he advanced and receded in the spinning operation, to prosecute his studies,

never relinquishing a truth until it was thoroughly understood and stored away in his mind. The Bible was the great text-book to which he applied his mind most closely, and from which he extracted the treasures of knowledge which he considered most worthy of seeking after.

He invariably repaired to his closet before meeting public congregations, and struggled with the angel of God, until faith was vouchsafed that the Holy Spirit would strengthen and aid him; from the assembly he directly withdrew to his secret retreat, to plead that the seed sown might be received into good and honest hearts, and spring up, bringing forth fruit an hundred-fold. He was sometimes urged by the brethren to enter the ranks of itinerant ministers, and devote his entire life to the salvation of souls. On the one hand, he had a great desire to be useful in every spiritual point of view; on the other, he felt the strong claims which his family had on his efforts in a pecuniary way. He saw that the support obtained by the traveling preachers was meagre, and that the wives and children of these suffered deprivation from the perpetual absence of their head, and from the constant sacrifices which they were compelled to make. Moreover, the limited measure of his gifts, he argued, could not consistently lead him to expect an appointment where a family the size of his might be very comfortably maintained. For his own part he would have declined the most liberal positions of emolument or honor, to follow the advice of his counsellors, but he hesitated

to introduce her, whose previous life had been by his vacillation so unsettled and toilsome, to a life of still greater trial. He was confident that her allegiance to the cross, and the love she bore the Saviour's cause, were sufficient incentives for her to endure an existence of probation patiently, yet he could not think of her situation of comparative solitude and loneliness, without emotions of reluctance, that sealed his lips upon the subject. Were this feature of the case more favorable—the height of the sacerdotal office, its responsibility, to which he felt himself inadequate, and the humble opinion he entertained of his own abilities, together with the consciousness of his limited and inferior qualifications, he feared, would debar him from an admittance to the Annual Conference, were such his desire.

"At all events," he replied to those who intimated their fears that he did not occupy his proper position, "I shall continue my studies, and if the Great Head of the church design me for his exclusive work, in his own good time I shall be informed by the Holy Spirit and called by the Christians around me."

Mr. Stewart, as before noticed, looked upon the sacred desk as the most exalted position men are called to occupy. He apprehended from the conduct of some ministers, especially among the younger portion of the fraternity, where he had observed a misimprovement of precious, golden hours, that there was a fearful possibility of not sufficiently regarding the solemn office of a minister, and if he assumed this high prerogative he desired that he

might be well qualified in that he could exhibit a faultless and holy example, which is invariably the sequence of continual effort for God's kingdom. After "following righteousness, charity and peace with them that called on the Lord out of a pure heart" in Parkman during two years, he received a letter from his father announcing the death of his wife, and asking him to return to Burlington. In the event of his entering the ministerial ranks, he presumed that New Jersey would be better adapted to his circumstances than Ohio. He reflected that this might be a providential interposition, and after much earnest prayer and a conference with Mrs. Stewart, the resolution was formed to return, like Jacob, from the land which had proved to him a spiritual Canaan, "wherein his father was a stranger," and follow the distinct command which he felt was from God: "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there, and make thee an altar unto God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the country of thy father." Mrs. Stewart's mother had died in the full assurance of faith and gone home to a blessed immortality, and although it was a severe trial to say farewell to an only sister, she expressed a willingness to retrace her steps to the State of her nativity. Accordingly, on the 5th of September, 1827, they bade adieu to the country of their adoption, in which so many happy seasons had been enjoyed, and so many glorious conversions witnessed. The journal of this date runs thus:—

"I adjusted my affairs, and left the little town of

Parkman with my wife and four children, Maria, James, Joseph, and Sarah, in a carriage which conveyed us to New Jersey, after a pleasant journey of eighteen days. Now I was placed among altogether a different society or class of people. I could not long hold my peace, however, but soon commenced to lift my voice in honor of Christ. The Lord soon showed me that my coming east was in accordance with his Divine will."

When Mr. Stewart was returning to Ohio after his visit to Burlington, three years previous to his removal, he rested for a night among the mountains of Pennsylvania with Mr. Isaac Potter, the hospitable landlord of a small country inn. Requesting permission, he had summoned the neighbors, and "waited on his exhortation" by administering the Gospel of truth to them. When he arrived with his family at this public house, he received a cordial greeting from Mr. Potter, who imparted the cheering intelligence of his conversion, and insisted upon "a second edition" of his preaching ere he proceeded. Encouraged by past success, he was constrained to comply with the landlord's request, though involving the sacrifice of half a day's travel. An appointment was made for the evening, and published by Mr. Potter's pious servant girl, who, having heard his previous sermon with uncontrolled delight, went from house to house inviting the people to come up to the school-house to-night if they wished to hear "the greatest preacher that ever crossed the Alleghany Mountains."

CHAPTER V.

AN ITINERANT AND MISSIONARY.

Exhorting license renewed—Caleb Lippincott—Receives license to preach from Charles Pitman—Received on trial at Conference in Philadelphia—William Granville—Sent to Pemberton Circuit—Vincenttown camp-meeting—Henry Boem—Sent to Bergen Mission—Hardships on new ground—Illness—Extracts from diary—Compelled to ask of Christians the privilege of staying all night—Revisits Pemberton Circuit—New Brunswick camp-meeting—Effect of a sermon by Dr. Pitman—Prayer-meeting at Joseph Robbins'—James Folwell—Revival on the Mission—Henry Roberts—A letter.

THE first quarterly meeting on Burlington Circuit after Mr. Stewart's return from Ohio, was held at Mount Holly. His exhorting license was renewed, and he was admitted into the Quarterly Conference of West Jersey District. He labored the two succeeding years on Burlington and Tuckerton circuits, with Caleb Lippincott, a converted Quaker, and a redoubtable friend and advocate of the gospel. Although not anxious to enter the traveling connection, he could not divest his mind of the impression that he ought to preach. In the mean time, he waited patiently a clearer revelation from God concerning him. The love of Christ constrained him, and fired

his heart, and his talents were exercised at every possible opportunity with powerful and almost wonderful effect. He would frequently work in the field until four o'clock in the afternoon, and then, saddling his horse, ride ten or fifteen miles, preach in a crowded school-house, witness the awakening of many of those who had been attracted by curiosity to hear "the western preacher," and return to Burlington, singing as he rode along, under the face of the midnight sky—

> How happy is the pilgrim's lot,
> How free from every anxious thought,
> From worldly hope and fear;
> Confined to neither court nor cell,
> His soul disdains on earth to dwell,
> He only sojourns here.

He continued to labor in this way, "counting the things which were gain to him, loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord," until January 30th, 1830, when he received his first written license to preach, at Mount Holly, from Rev. Charles Pitman. Prior to this, he had explained the word of God as assisted by the ability which God conferred, with verbal authority from the preachers in charge of the respective circuits on which he lived. Now he went forth with a double commission: that of his presiding elder, written upon paper, and the credentials of high Heaven, indelibly impressed upon his heart.

Shortly after this, the failing health of Rev. James Moore, an old and worthy veteran of the cross in the Methodist connection, compelled him to relinquish

the active service, and retire within the tents, while those possessing superior physical abilities, continued to wage the battle with the enemies of Christ. This vacation opened the door of the itinerancy for Mr. Stewart, and, receiving a communication from Mr. Pitman to that effect, he went to Pemberton Circuit. Thus was he literaly thrust into the field in which he, doubtless, should have been laboring ten years before. In the ten months which passed previous to his going to Pemberton, he worked but seventeen full days on the farm. He commenced in good earnest that dauntless service in the glorious cause of the Captain of salvation, which he continued, with unflagging zeal, for nearly twenty years. An idea of his intense interest for the perishing souls within his jurisdiction, and of his signal success, may be formed from the fact that, during the three months which elapsed between the beginning of his career and the ensuing conference, he preached twenty-four sermons extra, and received seventy professing conversion into membership. These three months were harmoniously passed with Rev. William Granville. This brother was subsequently impressed with the idea that his talents were better adapted to the Protestant Episcopal branch of Christ's Catholic Church, and was transferred to the diocese of New York.

Conference met at Philadelphia, April 14th, 1830, Bishop Hedding presiding. Mr. Stewart was present for the first time, and was received on trial. Several men with families having applied for admittance, Bishop Hedding inquired of the presiding

elder, Mr. Pitman, if any location suitable for the candidate was open upon his district, to which the unhesitating reply was made, "Half-a-dozen places are open for Mr. Stewart." He was returned to Pemberton Circuit, and removed his family to Medford, from which place he went statedly to eleven appointments—Pemberton, Wrightstown, New Egypt, Imlaystown, Atzion, Vincenttown, Imlay's Hill, Buddtown, Tabernacle, Cookstown, Zion, and several school-house missions. Pemberton was the most important point in this circuit, exhibiting a majority of members over any other of the churches. In 1832, it was cut off from the circuit, and subsequently supported its own stationed preacher. When Mr. Stewart first entered the Medford chapel, in 1829, seventeen names were enrolled on the church records; at his departure, May 10th, 1831, they had been increased by one hundred and thirty-three, making a round number of one hundred and fifty. In the other appointments, especially at Imlay's Hill, copious showers of grace fell, refreshing the churches, and causing the implanted seed to spring up in many good and honest hearts, such as held nobly to the profession of their faith. Scores, ere this, have been gathered, as ripe sheaves, into the garner of the Lord; and perhaps as many are still fighting as good soldiers, looking to Jesus, the author of their faith, resolved to run the whole length of the celestial road, that they may receive the welcome plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servants; ye have

been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things."

Rev. Henry Boem, a German, possessing many of the noble characteristics of his nation, was Mr. Stewart's agreeable colleague this year. This worthy laborer had been employed with an undivided heart in the vineyard of the Lord during many successive years, and frequently related anecdotes of Bishop Asbury, with whom he was intimate in the first part of his ministry. Mr. Boem resided in Pemberton, and was continued after Mr. Stewart's removal.

A camp-meeting was held at Vincenttown this year, which resulted in a gracious outpouring of the Spirit; multitudes were converted to God, and at the present day, many saints, within the range of old Pemberton Circuit, cherish the names of Boem and Stewart as the messengers of Heaven by whom their wandering feet were conducted into the path of life. The people petitioned the Annual Conference, held at Philadelphia, in the spring of 1831, for Mr. Stewart's return the ensuing year, but having been with them fifteen months, and many of the preachers being of the opinion that his dauntless intrepidity and indefatigable perseverance would constitute a successful missionary, he was sent to Bergen Neck Mission, in Bergen County, over a hundred miles northeast from Medford.

Leaving his two sons with two of "the original seventeen" in this village, to learn trades, he set out with the remainder of his family for Jersey City,

where they arrived on the 13th of May, after a tedious wagon journey of three days.

The religious condition of the Mission was very discouraging when he entered upon his work. The appointments were Jersey City, Hoboken, and Fort Lee; in the three, he found the names of *only twenty members*. There was much deep-rooted prejudice against Methodism, especially at Fort Lee, whose inhabitants were principally Germans. His congregations were small; those who favored him with their presence, considered themselves abused, and did not condescend to make a second appearance, unless individually waited upon by the minister and thanked for their attendance. Mr. Stewart's support was inadequate, being but $200, besides the house-rent, $50, which were paid for three small apartments in the dwelling of Mr. Francis Palmer, a Frenchman, who was at once sexton, trustee, chorister, and conductor generally of all the important arrangements connected with and relating to the Methodist Church. Mr. Palmer bore his official honors without ostentation, and he was neither perplexed by their ponderous weight of responsibility nor by apprehensions of any one of them being usurped, or lost by suffrage. His wife, an amiable Irish lady, was converted before immigrating to America, and had frequently heard John Wesley preach in the parlor of her mother's house, in Ireland.

Mr. Stewart's prospects, as before stated, were gloomy enough upon his arrival at the Mission;

frequently, in the first three months of his labors, he traversed sections within his boundaries, where his sermons were rejected; the people peremptorily refusing to open a door for him to enter. "Sometimes," says his journal, "I travel among strangers, cold and unsympathizing, and often faint through hunger and fatigue; but in God, who feeds my soul with the bread of life, and supports my sinking spirit, do I put my confidence, and I shall never be confounded. My thoughts frequently revert to the dear ones on Pemberton Circuit.

> "My friends—do they now and then send
> A wish or a thought after me?
> Oh, tell me I yet have a friend,
> Though him I am never to see."

In his three churches, the congregations seldom exceeded ten or fifteen, and these were poor. He had taken his horse to Jersey City; but when visiting his preaching places, he was now obliged to place him in the stable of strangers, and pay exorbitant prices for provender, so was compelled to sell him to avoid the extra expense thus incurred, and walk, or go to his appointments by public conveyance. He added, nevertheless, Communipaw, Bergen Point, and several other places to his list. His mind, in lonely journeyings through forests or over the hills, was, at times, deeply affected, especially when he thought of his family, deprived of all the luxuries and many of the comforts of life. He cast a lingering glance over the past, and it seemed that he had brought but little gladness and no rest to his

beloved companion's heart; subjecting her, as he had, to numerous migrations and frequent changes. But assured of her perfect resignation to the will of God concerning him, and recollecting that she had besought him to perform his duty, whatever it might be, without consulting her convenience, he turned to inspiration and read the promise of God to them, "who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality," and to Paul's exhortation, to "endure hardness as good soldiers." Comforted and encouraged, he went to his little churches, rejoicing to be honored as a servant of Christ, whom he endeavored to hold up to the gaze of the people. When thus triumphing, he testifies to having experienced a contentment and happiness of heart which often are denied those surrounded by the luxuries and blessings afforded by affluence. Among the rocks and hills and in the valleys of the Hudson River, after delivering his message to a scanty congregation, his lips would chime:—

The things eternal I pursue,
A happiness beyond the view
  Of those that basely pant
For things by nature felt and seen;
Their honors, wealth, and pleasures mean,
  I neither have nor want.

No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in this wilderness;
  A poor wayfaring man,
I lodge awhile in tents below,
Or gladly wander to and fro
  Till I my Canaan gain.

Untiring when in health and somewhat imprudent in over-exertion when indisposed, the labors which he attempted on the mission ground soon proved too great for his physical vigor. After preaching in the house of Josiah Johnson, at Hackensack, on the 4th of July, and perspiring freely, he returned to his home in the evening; a violent cold was induced, and Mr. Stewart was confined to the house for eight days, a longer time than he had rested from his labor for two years.

The few friends with whom his family was blessed in Jersey City, were unremitting in attention and Christian sympathy, and the wife of the class-leader of that place, Mrs. Paradise, was, by her continued solicitude, bound to the pastor's heart by a strong band of affection which never was sundered. July 12th was the first day of his going out. He met a friend, and after the usual salutation, exclaimed: "I thank God sincerely for the few souls which he has given me on the Mission. Oh, how I love to see the work of the Lord reviving! But this is a desperate place. God wants to be gracious, and men flee from him. Never did the conduct of a city's denizens declare more loudly, 'We will not have the man Christ Jesus to reign over us.' Never did the guilt of a people clamor more loudly for an administration of retributive justice, but I pray Heaven that the lifted thunder may not drop on these rebellious spirits." How often are mercies increased to sinful men by the fervent effectual

prayers of the very ministers of God whom they despise and ridicule?

A few days after Mr. Stewart's convalescence, he rode to a village near New York to which one hundred and twenty-five families had been driven by the great conflagration in that city. Many who had depended upon affluence for support and happiness, poor and houseless, sought refuge beneath the humble roofs of toiling mechanics, with scarcely habiliments sufficient to cover them. He was reminded of the advice of Solomon, "Labor not to be rich! Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle toward heaven."

Physical inability warning him not to enter the pulpit for a few days, on Friday, he walked several miles to try and secure the service of a brother, with whom he was not personally acquainted, to relieve him of the labor of preaching on the ensuing Sabbath. Reaching the town of his destination at 8 o'clock in the evening, he called upon two local preachers, at neither of whose houses he heard an inquiry whether he had partaken supper, nor an invitation to accept the hospitality of their domicils during the night! Weary from travel and weak from recent illness, he felt totally inadequate to the task of returning without nourishment and rest; consequently was compelled to ask of Christians, apparently indifferent to the necessities of a brother, the privilege of remaining beneath their roof. Had these forgotten the injunction of Paul to the Hebrews in his valedictory

to that persecuted people, when, after exhorting them to strive vigorously to promote the united interests of peace and holiness, he requested them to exercise brotherly affection, to live a life of thankfulness to God and benevolence to mankind, and "not to be forgetful to entertain strangers"? Unwilling to intrude further upon those who seemed so utterly devoid of Christian solicitude, he bade his *entertainers* an early farewell, and set out for Jersey City. Fortunately he encountered a familiar friend who conducted him to the house of a relative where every deficiency was amply repaired, and who sent him in a carriage to the city of his residence. Though incapacitated to a still greater measure by his journey and suffering, he rode twenty miles on the Sabbath and preached three sermons. Here we find his mind again recurring to the past. He says: "I have many concerns and responsibilities, but enjoy much religion, which supports me. Lord, help me! My head and heart often ache on this mission; but what is this to that which the missionaries of heathen lands endure! How often I think of the kindness of Pemberton Circuit, of the many benevolent friends in Tuckerton and Medford. I feel as though I was far, far away from home—a pilgrim and a stranger; soon it will be said of me, 'There he lived and there he died!' Lord, preserve me from inactivity and lukewarmness! Spare me from being brought to this arena, to defame the position, reduce the standard of religion, and spot the pure church. Lord, keep *me* pure!"

On the 17th of July he preached to the sailors in

New York, and remained over night in the city. A serious fire occurred near the house of the brother with whom he lodged; he records it thus: "About thirty houses were destroyed. Many families were deprived of comfortable homes. A lady and three children were consumed in one of the dwellings. Oh, how many dejected countenances I saw! If they have 'the peace of God,' how well is it now!"

Fine gold will change and diamonds fade,
Swift wings to wealth are given;
All varying time our forms invade,
The seasons roll, light sinks in shade;
There 's nothing lasts but Heaven.

On the 29th, indulging a hope that an excursion upon the sea would prove beneficial to his health, which was still in a somewhat precarious state, he repaired with his daughter Maria to New York, and went on board of a vessel with about four hundred individuals, principally Methodists, who proposed a sail along Sandy Hook to Long Branch.

"I was deeply grieved," says he, of this company, "to find the Methodists of New York City conformed in a great degree to the world. I fear many of the professors of religion in our body were not 'transformed by the renewing of their minds,' and had not 'proved what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' I inquired of one of the preachers if the blessing of sanctification was generally sought for among his parishioners, and the response was such as I might have anticipated, *I do not know.* This minister cannot certainly enjoy that measure of grace

and faith which the shepherd of a flock ought to, else would his soul go out in strong, irresistible, vehement desire for the sheep of his fold—that they might be made partakers of 'a like precious faith' and 'perfect holiness in the fear of God.'"

There was, perhaps, nothing which elicited the sorrow of Mr. Stewart's soul to such an infinite degree as the sight of a man or woman possessing the form of godliness to deny its power. He considered that the state of such was tenfold more deplorable and hopeless than that of the outbreaking sinner; persuaded as they were by the Devil to imagine themselves "followers of God as dear children;" or else, careless and indifferent of the pernicious example with which they presented the world—*a greater impediment to the cause of Christianity than the most extended phalanx of infidels the world might marshal!*

A well known author observes that "the weak and the wavering have, in every age, outnumbered the vigorous and unshaken professors of Christianity." Mr. Stewart beheld in his day with irrepressible concern, the large class of unsteady and formal believers. But while he bewailed their instability, he did not deprive them of an ample proportion of his love, and he labored to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees with untiring assiduity.

July 22d, he says: "This morning we had a gloriously good time at a prayer meeting in Jersey City. A heavenly shower fell on all the congregation, and I trust this is the earnest or antepast of

the deluge of Christ's spirit which we shall enjoy at Tom's River camp-meeting, for which we are making preparations. I pray God to accompany us."

July 23d. "At our meeting to-night the Lord of glory met us. I observed many wet eyes, and I am persuaded that there was convicting power among us. Saints were blessed, and their shouts attracted near fifty persons around the windows. In this city shouting is condemned. I wish Christians had religion enough not to condemn it. But I find if we serve God faithfully, we shall be considered enthusiasts. Other denominations censure us for our excitement and boisterous ejaculations, but I thank God that we feel like it. The King was among us to night, and should not his subjects be allowed to make the welkin ring with songs of delight and exclamations of praise? Glory to God! We will! We will!"

Shortly after this, he was attacked by an infidel in one of the streets of Jersey City. Retiring to an obscure quarter of the wharf which the two had approached, Mr. Stewart labored several hours in exercising every power of his mind and bringing every passage of Scripture, bearing upon the point, to assist in the subversion of infidelity and the vindication of the genuineness of Christianity.

This open antagonist of our holy religion was unable to reason upon the subject; did not utter a syllable in support of his diabolical creed, but accumulated superficial objections to the faith and Bible of his opponent. By his native penetration, the

minister of the gospel saw that the whole foundation of the infidel's objections, like that of the majority of his class, was composed of the natural pride and corruption of the human heart. In leaving, he expressed a fear that unless he should repent and yield to be saved by the terms of the gospel, judgment would speedily overtake him and he be left "without remedy." The following day Mr. Stewart was called upon to preach a funeral sermon, and upon inquiry, learned it was that of the incorrigible infidel whom he had conversed with and warned. But a few hours after the interview, he had fallen into the river, and *could not be rescued.*

He frequently related the circumstance when addressing opposers of the religion of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The privilege of again beholding the friends of Pemberton Circuit at the camp-meeting, was one which Mr. Stewart highly appreciated and thanked God for. His meeting his two sons, James and Joseph, was a time of silence and weeping; all were too much overcome to express the gladness that pervaded their hearts, and each experienced the truth of the sentiment, "The soul feels most when the lips move not."

A season of general conversion and rejoicing was witnessed at the meeting, and Mr. Stewart hastened away to be present at another which was to be held near New Brunswick. He furnishes an account of the wonderful effect of one sermon delivered by Rev. Charles Pitman, Aug. 1st.

"At the close of his discourse the people were so

overwhelmed, that a deathly silence prevailed on the ground. Tears, copious and glistening, gushed up from every heart. The heaven-inspired brother himself, almost removed beyond the power of utterance, motioned to one who sat near him to pray. The congregation knelt down, and for five minutes not a voice was heard. It was a melting, soul subduing time. Eventually a prayer meeting was commenced, and 'then came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind.' Believers were sanctified, and sinners brought to the foot of the cross. Two preachers, Brother P——, and Brother B——, fell prostrate on the ground, and lay in a state of apparent unconsciousness during several hours."

An old man, who had not heard a sermon for twenty years, led thither by curiosity, heard Brother Pitman's discourse, fell beneath the power of conviction, yielded to be saved on the terms of the gospel, was blessed and returned home "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." And "so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

Aug. 5th. Mr. Stewart arrived in Wrightstown and preached from the Parable of the Sower, in the evening. "Some seed," says he, "fell on good ground before I had concluded my sermon. The people were shouting, leaping and praising God, and I thanked the Saviour out of a sincere heart fervently. Three times I advised the congregation to retire after the prayer meeting, but it was impossible to make myself heard, amid the singing and praying of this ear-

nest people. However, about twelve o'clock, the sexton succeeded in clearing the church and closing its doors; although the voices of those who had vacated the holy inclosure were heard as they, on foot and in carriages, pursued their happy, homeward way."

I remained with Brother Solomon Imlay during the night, and passed the next day with Brother William Horner. I tried to preach on Sabbath morning and evening at Imlay's Hill, and, drawing the gospel net, a few sinners were caught and made partakers of the precious faith of the children of God.

Aug. 11th. "Passed this day with Joseph and George Robbins. In the evening a prayer meeting was held at the house of the former. All present were refreshed by the showers of God's grace and love which fell. Three of the number were powerfully blessed, falling upon the floor and shouting for two hours. May God keep this people 'always abounding in the work of the Lord!' My spirit's aspirations go out in behalf of the friends I am with, and all, who, when I sojourned among them, offered me a home in the midst of their families. We shall meet in a better land.

"But I must go and preach to them who do not yet love the name of our Jesus, away, away in cold, repulsive Bergen mission. But this is my delight, to endure for Christ, even as he suffered for me, if need be. 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the

glory that shall be revealed in me,' if faithful to the commission intrusted to my weak hands."

"Happy, if, with my latest breath,
I may but gasp his name;
Preach him to all, and cry, in death,
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'"

When Mr. Stewart was favored with a means of grace and did not find himself sensibly quickened, it was a source of deep humiliation to him. Under such circumstances he always regarded himself as *a criminal;* he felt that neglect of some public or private duty or remissness in some department of his official character, debarred him from that intimate communion with, and faith in God, which invariable prevails at a throne of mercy. He deemed it the glorious privilege of all Christians to live in constant intimacy with God; to be joined in life with the Author of their existence; to feel, when admiring the beauty and grandeur of nature, that they could look up and in the rapture of conscious adoption exclaim, "My Father made it all!" When such was not the state of Christians, he apprehended that they were not yet dead to the law; not quite slain by the commandment; *not an heir of God!*

At the little meeting in the house of Mr. Robbins, however, all were free men and women in Christ Jesus, and this good man was led to exclaim, "Us hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins."

Near the domicil of Mr. Joseph Robbins, stood the farm-house of Mrs. Susan Folwell, a worthy lady of

the sect of Friends. The noise made by the worshippers on this occasion, attracted a son and daughter to the meeting. James, a young man of about twenty years, who did not venture to enter, but stood gazing with peculiar interest through one of the open windows, was, for the first time, impressed with a sense of his lost condition unless made acquainted with experimental piety and brought to a knowledge of pardoned sin through the merits of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He returned home resolved to seek the Lord with his whole heart. On the following Sabbath evening Mr. Folwell walked four miles to a Methodist meeting. Disappointed in not having an invitation to approach the altar, he started home with a heart borne down beneath its ponderous load of guilt and sin, praying, as he plodded along the highway, that God would for Christ's sake have mercy upon him and cancel his transgressions. He at length arrived in front of a small house, occupied by Neddy Conner, a colored man, justly distinguished for deep, genuine, and enthusiastic piety. Entering the humble tenement, he unfolded the wretchedness of his state, requesting Neddy to pray for his immediate release from the thraldom of Satan; which request being complied with, and the supplications of the holy Christian going up to Heaven, attended with an exercise of strong faith, the soul of the penitent was set at perfect liberty, and Mr. Folwell rejoiced in possession of—

> "A peace to sensual mind unknown,
> A joy unspeakable."

Mr. Stewart had departed for his home, and did not hear of this conversion until a letter was received from him to whom his preaching had proved "a savor of life unto life."

Restored in health, renewed in the spirit of Christ, strengthened by might according to his glorious power, and longing after sinners in the bowels of the Saviour, he commenced a series of evening meetings in Jersey City; but opposed by the various sects by whom they were surrounded, ridiculed by a censorious public, and buffeted by the deformed shapes and hideous clamors of the powers of darkness, it was found to be very laborious and almost discouraging work.

His confidence, however, was strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, and his coadjutors, though few in number, coming up with simultaneous and faithful concurrence to the effectual help of the Lord against the mighty, the army of the devil was repulsed, and sixteen willing captives were taken for the Lord Jesus, increasing the mission membership to thirty-seven.

Henry Roberts, a young man, possessing an unusual depth of intelligence, was among the number. He betook himself from that time to studies of a sacred nature, and his pastor, observing an exemplary devotion and an unusual solicitude for the unconverted, after conversing with him upon the subject, brought his name before the church, recommending him as an exhorter. The proposition was sanctioned, and in three months from the date of his

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adoption into the family of Christ, Mr. Roberts was beseeching those, without hope and weltering in the mire of their own corruption, to come out and stand upon a Rock, which is firm, strong and immovable. Having tasted "the good word of life," and drank of "living waters," he was desirous that all should come "buy wine and milk, without money and without price." He soon after resolved to consecrate himself to the work of the holy ministry, and he is, at the present day, an acceptable servant of the true and living God. Thus in barren places can God produce a harvest, and among persecutors, raise up heralds to proclaim the tidings of the cross.

In the early part of November, after having again visited Imlaystown, Mr. Stewart received a second letter from James Folwell, who, considering himself under many obligations to the instrument in his conviction of sin, and for the advice afterward received, expressed the unfeigned gratitude of his joyous spirit, and invited him to come to the house of his mother when again in that vicinity.

Mr. Stewart's unbounded concern for the kingdom of Christ induced him not only to speak of divine things in all companies where he was thrown, but also to write spiritual letters to his friends, and sometimes to strangers whom he thought he might edify or encourage. The following, written to James Folwell, from Jersey City, bears the date of November 29th, 1831:—

Dear Friend: You will excuse me for delay in writing, when I inform you that I have been from

home, assisting the presiding elder at different places. Last Sabbath I preached three sermons in Jersey City. On Monday I was called to preach a funeral sermon, and in the evening I attended our society meeting, which occasioned as much exercise as delivering a discourse. I am now afflicted with something like influenza; yet, as I love my friends, and delight in a Christian correspondence, I enter with my soul into that exercise. Though I do not profess to be a profitable correspondent, there is no present so valuable to *my* feelings as a few lines from my friends; particularly if the ties of those friendships are formed in Christian affection—

> "Where mingling hearts strange union know,
> And learn to love as angels do."

When I was with you in Imlaystown, I rejoiced to see you engaged in one of the best of causes; ay, *the very best cause!* How shall I find language to express my grateful feelings on this subject? Angels rejoice in heaven over one sinner that repenteth! All the angels of heaven are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation! Oh, where shall I obtain language, properly to paraphrase a theme so exalted! Why do not tears of joy run down my face while I write? Why do not anthems of praise and echoing hallelujahs flow from my pen instead of silent ink—to portray a theme so transcendently glorious? It is the glory of conquest! Oh, what a conquest! Founded in the blood of atonement! Producing in the Christian an ability to face all opposition and

gain a glorious crown! What cause have we for thankfulness! How shall we make suitable returns to God for favors so sublime? We will *honor* him who has redeemed us: honor him with holy actions —spread his fame abroad with our tongues! We will spend our strength, our lives in Christ's cause, and, if need be, our property, and die in poverty; yet, possessing all things in "the unsearchable riches." Eventually, with Lazarus, we may be borne away to the New Jerusalem.

We who have realized Christ's love in our experience, require some new and more powerful dialect to express it! We will communicate it to angels when we get to heaven; then we shall be able to tell it. Angels shall hear of Christ's love to us, as we walk, arm-in-arm, or sit beneath the Tree of Life! There, names, distinctions, and sects, will not be known, but all will be *the redeemed of the Lord!* Perhaps we will wander over the blest hills of immortality, and, erecting monuments, will write them all over with the story of the manger and the cross! By faith, gazing over the celestial plain, I see the glittering attire of saints! Saints and angels and all the heavenly hierarchy: they wander along the flowery bank of life's stream, and sing the celestial song, ever sweet and ever new! Their garments are purely white—and sweeping their harp-strings, they chant harmoniously a song, fit for the ear of God! But as the Queen of Sheba said concerning the glory of Solomon, "the half has not been told."

My dear Christian friend, you have commenced a

good work; persevere to the end. Strive to be "an active member" of the church of Jesus Christ. There is no standing still in religion. Let the mind be stored with useful knowledge. Recollect the promise, "He that watereth, himself shall be watered." In the world to come we shall be rewarded according to our works. Expect trial and opposition now; look for little from this vain, delusive world, and then you will not be disappointed. Be often in your closet in spiritual exercise, and in communion with God. Many professors of religion live too little *with* God. Religion has become popular in this day, or at least *a profession*, and instead of Christians being "of one heart and soul," there are "strifes and divisions," which is a positive proof of their weakness. I feel for you as a brother, and advise in the language of affection. I am attached to the place of your residence, and to the inhabitants of Imlaystown. I have attachments here also. Please present my respects to your friends and connections, if they think me worthy of their friendly notice. Remember me in love to Joseph, James, George, and Joel Robbins, and their families; also to Samuel Hendrickson. Say to John Thomas that I often think of him, and fear he will permit Satan to get the advantage of him. Tell him I desire his well-being, and that if he neglect his soul he will not be the help to his wife he ought to be. It is a hard battle, if a companion concur with us—how discouraging when this is not the case. If a man does not assist his family, he will retard their spiritual progress:

they look for an example worthy of imitation in him. And there is no neutrality here: "a man cannot serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." A wife is the weaker vessel: God designs the two to be helpmeets, and as they are "no longer twain but one flesh," they should be one in heart, one in Christ Jesus! Write and tell me how you prosper spiritually, and how religion prospers generally in that place.

Yours, in the ties of Christianity,

THOS. G. STEWART.

To JAMES FOLWELL, Esq., *Imlaystown, N. J.*

CHAPTER VI.

FREEHOLD CIRCUIT.

Mr. Stewart is ordained a deacon at Wilmington—Appointed to Freehold Circuit—Removal to Long Branch—Review of the circuit—Freehold and Red Bank adopted into it—David Bartine—Peculiar manner of Thos. G. Stewart—Large ingathering of souls—Anecdote—Letter to James Folwell—Conversion of John Hopper—Revival influence—Mr. Bartine supernumerary—Messrs. Long and Day sent to the circuit—Reflections upon the ministerial trio—Extract from diary.

THE Philadelphia Conference of 1832 was held at Wilmington, and Mr. Stewart having passed acceptably and creditably through the two years of his probation, took an affectionate leave of his friends upon the mission, among whom were the spiritual children God had honored his ministrations with, to whom he was strongly attached, and repaired to that assembly for the purpose of giving the requisite proof of soundness in the faith, and being ordained for the exclusive work of the pastoral office. He was formally introduced to the body of clergymen, with whom he was to be permanently identified in extending the kingdom of Christ, now rapidly enlarging, through the united and strenuous exertions of those holy and indomitable men.

Bishop Hedding was present, and presided at the session; he ordained Mr. Stewart on Sunday, the 15th of April, and at its close, appointed him to Freehold Circuit, with David Bartine as preacher in charge.

Although the previous year Mr. Stewart had had but comparatively few preaching places, it had been a season of peculiarly hard service. The entire labor and care of the church business, of attending the sick, and upon funerals, in addition to the general pastoral visitation—concerning which he was never remiss—devolved upon him. Prompt to the bidding of his Divine Master, and willing to pursue, as nearly as practicable, in the thorny path of his suffering Exemplar, he never murmured, but looking continually to his sympathizing and omnipotent Friend, asked, and received, in Jesus' name, that almost supernatural strength, which carried him triumphantly through. During the whole year in which he traversed the hills of Bergen, his pulpits were filled by other but their regular incumbent, *only three times!*

The parsonage into which he moved on Freehold Circuit, was in Long Branch, a healthful town, lying within sound of the Atlantic's roar. This change from small pent-up rooms, in part of a house, to a large and convenient dwelling, within a half hour's walk of the sea, was as acceptable to the minister's family, as to the good man himself. It was about the middle of May when they arrived at their new home; the whole country was glowing with luxu-

riant verdure and beauty, and nature—as generously as the friends who had gathered at the parsonage—seemed smiling a welcome to them. Mr. Stewart's heart went out in thankfulness to God, that his lot was cast in such a pleasant place, among a people, so many of whom were evidently sincere and kind-spirited Christians.

The circuit was large; besides including eight principal appointments, it presented a number of minor ones, where the preachers had been accustomed to hold forth in private, or school-houses. Four hundred miles were traversed in going around once. Mr. Stewart was, of course, obliged to have recourse again to a horse and *dearborn*. Three weeks were required to make one circuit and preach at each place; every fourth, he called "rest week," and passed at home in study and preparation for the ensuing campaign. Long Branch exhibited a membership of nearly two hundred, which was the largest upon the circuit. At Squankum there was a good-sized membership of genuine, whole-souled disciples of the cross, also, at Bethany, Rumson, and Middletown, and High Points. At the first of this list, before the expiration of one year, the church was enlarged, and then scarcely accommodated the congregations which assembled on every occasion of public service. In the town of Freehold, there was neither church edifice nor Methodist member; an appointment was at once made there, and preaching was had statedly. A revival followed, and in 1833, a handsome church was erected. Red Bank, a brisk town, at the head

of Shrewsbury Bay, was also adopted by the circuit, and, although there were but two Methodist families in the place, by the assistance of the brethren of Rumson and Tilton Falls, villages a few miles distant, an excellent audience was soon obtained, and the Spirit was poured out upon the people copiously. Mr. Stewart, it is supposed, was the first Methodist who ever preached in Red Bank.

The Christians of the circuit were delighted with the zeal displayed and wonders performed by the colleagues this year. Mr. Bartine was a man "mighty in the Scriptures," and no less powerful in prayer. His sermons were heavily charged with heart-reaching truths, and they were aimed with irresistible effect to the consciences of sinners; so that, despite his age —about sixty—he was a most successful preacher of the gospel of Christ.

Mr. Stewart, with the distinguishing characteristics of early Methodism, was possessed of unwavering faith in God, untiring perseverance in labor, and a remarkable power in applying the truth singly and personally. "I preach to *thee*, sinner! My message to-day is to bring *thee* to bethink thyself of thy past ways," &c.

He was altogether untrammeled by the rules of logic or rhetoric; but in detached sentences, and blunt phrases, what, in this refined day, would be called "no preaching at all," he *shouted the truth* to the people with a power that made sinners stand appalled in their danger. His great force lay, rather, in impulsive, animated, startling exhortation, than in

rich and beautiful sentiment, or abstruse theological argumentation. He was, in the fullest sense, "a minister to the heart," and suitable for the masses. He cared not to tingle the ears of critics with finely-wrought sentences, or elaborate episodes, he desired rather a full measure of faith and grace than "a magnificent talent."

While Mr. Bartine produced to his hearers "things new and old," Mr. Stewart brought forth *old truths*, clad in garbs of plain, practical, matter-of-fact texture, that told instantly upon the *old sinner*, who had viewed the same in beautiful array, a thousand times, without effect. So, devotionally, zealously, harmoniously, worked these servants of the living God, together; and, at the summing up of the converted, prior to Conference in the spring of 1833, the names of *seven hundred souls* were found! Revivals were enjoyed at every appointment on the circuit. Long Branch added one hundred to her strength; Bethany, Squankum, Colt's Neck, Middletown Point, Freehold, and the Trap, enjoyed seasons long to be remembered on account of the display of God's convicting and converting power.

When Mr. Stewart first entered the pulpit of the church at a little town called Squan Neck, which was, from the multitude of appointments, compelled to be placed on the Saturday list, his congregations numbered about twenty-five individuals. He was greatly annoyed by the perpetual *ten-pound-ten* of a blacksmith's sledge on one side of the church, and the incessant *rap, rap, rap* of a shoemaker's hammer on the

other. Growing animated as he advanced in his all absorbing theme, he forgot the objects of interruption, and elevating his sonorous voice louder still as he attained "the application," and stamping his ecclesiastical foot upon the carpetless platform with startling gusto, the mechanics deserted their places of business and approached near enough to hear the "closing remarks" and the date of the minister's succeeding advent; upon which occasion the church was well filled, and every mechanic of the village was in attendance, clad in his Sabbath day attire. On his return from this first visit to the various localities in which he was to labor during the succeeding two years, he indited the following letter to Mr. James Folwell. Its caption is—

LONG BRANCH, May 28, 1832.

DEAR BROTHER: I have just returned from a tour on my circuit, and was much blessed and refreshed in spirit. I found a very simple, teachable, and affectionate people who received me as a divinely authorized messenger of the cross of Christ. I labor among them with much satisfaction. I preached last Sabbath from "These men are the servants of the Most High God." (Acts xvi. 17.) God vouchsafed me much liberty. Also in the afternoon at Squankum. At the latter place many were inquiring what they should do to be saved. I received two into probationary membership. Oh, what weeping was there! Some cried out, as of old, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." There is room for work in the

neighborhood of Long Branch. We can stand in one place and count a hundred and twenty houses, the majority of whose inmates are in the state of nature's darkness. There is, I think, much hope, though, unless they are very much hardened. The people *flock* to the prayer meetings, which are held from time to time in private houses. We are compelled to conceal them from the public, lest they come in multitudes that could not be accommodated. Pray for us at this interesting time. I often think of the affectionate friends in Imlaystown, and of the kind treatment I received at their hands when I was a sojourner among them. I am every day making new acquaintances, but these, though pleasant, have no tendency to wean from old and well tried friends! I shall never find a people dearer to me than those of your town and Allentown. The last time I was in Bethany we were favored with an unusual outpouring of the Spirit; several individuals lost their strength and consciousness, falling on the floor and lying for several hours. Many rejoiced in the knowledge of pardoned sin, and some were induced to sue for mercy.

My family are well with the exception of Martha, the youngest, who has the whooping-cough. We are pleasantly situated, and would be glad to receive a visit from you at any time. Our neighbors are peaceable and kind. Brother Sayers keeps a boarding-house immediately on the sea. We resort thither frequently, and view this great body of water so fearfully beautiful. I preached a few days since at the Monmouth County "poor-house." It contains over

one hundred inmates; some of them are pious, others impious. My sympathies were awakened for them; the tottering white head, the shaking paralytic, the unfortunate youth! I have a heart that sympathizes with physical anguish as well as mental suffering.

> A man that has naught to bestow,
> Can at least give the wretched a tear;
> It will soothe the affliction of woe,
> When no other comfort is near.

In this case I was like Peter, silver and gold were not mine to bestow, but such as I had, was dispensed freely. I have a comfortable support, but the salary of a Methodist preacher forbids charity to any great extent. The gospel is *free* and I have the unspeakable privilege of recommending its benefits to the poor. This gives pleasure and contentment under all circumstances. I ask no higher honor than to be employed in benefiting my fellow men. Had I my whole life to re-live I would spend it in the vineyard of our Lord. How much of my time has been squandered! But the reflection that I have been instrumental in doing a little good, yields me a ray of comfort—yes, a comfort I cannot express. When I contemplate yonder world of bliss, I feel perfectly resigned to remain a pilgrim and stranger, to suffer on my threescore years till my Deliverer come. I will endure hardness as a good soldier of the manifold grace of God. Much is expected of a minister of the gospel. What holy ground do I occupy! How far short do I fall of filling up the measure of

the sufferings of Christ! Pray that my bow may abide in strength—that I may be a holy preacher of a holy gospel.

Present my respects to your dear mother. I trust her children will be a great comfort to her in the decline of life. To honor our parents is the first commandment with promise. I have recently heard of the death of my mother. *I rejoice to know that she was soundly converted before her death.*

Do not be discouraged, dear James, by anything which you may encounter; expect to meet with contrary winds on your Christian voyage. The severer the combat in the warfare the greater the deliverance. "Be faithful over *a few things*," is the injunction, "and I will make thee ruler over *many things*," is the promise. Seek nothing from this world. One day in the courts of Zion is better than a thousand in the tents of wickedness. When we reach Heaven we shall share "an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." But the poor, unfortunate sinner must be dragged away with those whose only inheritance is "a lake that burneth." Affliction, despair, rage, remorse, brokenness of heart, horror—these are but feeble expressions of the misery of the undying worm. Tell your sister Susan to walk in the footsteps of one who has *gone on;* the track leads upwards. Say to your youngest sister—though I am unworthy to advise her—that she should not throw her youthful moments to the wind. A misspent morning will cause a sorrowful evening. I desire also to be remembered to Elizabeth and

Ann; the time spent in their religious society is always profitable to me. Remember me also to my other friends in and out of the church.

Yours cordially,

THOS. G. STEWART.

To Mr. James Folwell, *Imlaystown, N. J.*

There resided in Long Branch Mr. John Hopper, a retired gentleman, now far advanced in years, who had amassed considerable wealth by a successful business career in the city of New York. He was corpulent in body, liberal in heart, and patient under physical suffering, but without that spiritual solace which brings light upon the evening of life. His wife had lived for many years a faithful and exemplary member of old John Street M. E. Church, and died rejoicing in the plenitude of Christ's mercy and grace. Mrs. Maria Ferguson, the widowed daughter who was now the stay and comfort of his declining years, was a firm friend of the Methodist church. Through this excellent lady Mr. Stewart became intimately acquainted with Mr. Hopper, and, as was his custom, when opportunity presented a proper occasion of counselling the unregenerate, he conversed pointedly with the aged man upon the all important subject connected with the eternal interests of his soul. He was eventually led to acknowledge himself a wretch undone without God's pardoning grace, and requested that his spiritual adviser should pray for his conversion. He attended the church with his daughter, and he was advised by the pastor to "take

up the cross," come out decidedly and boldly on the Lord's side, showing to the world that he was resolved to give God his heart, and henceforth serve him with full purpose of spirit, till called to a blessed existence with his Saviour up in Heaven. After listening to the preached word with singular immobility during so many years, permitting multiplied warnings to fall ineffectually upon his ear, and delaying till a more convenient season the setting out on Christian pilgrimage, the first step towards a result so desirable and important, was exceedingly difficult to take.

Ah! with each added year, the work becomes more laborious; and most frequently, alas, those who defer until threescore and ten that preparation for death which the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit have been all their life-long inviting them to perform, goes undone altogether; the aged pensioner of God's bounty ceases to feel as erst he felt; the start requires more vigorous effort than when greater sorrow on account of sin was experienced; the wily tempter suggests "too late, when the buoyancy of life is fled," and he dies unprepared to stand composedly before the awful Judge of the quick and dead.

Mr. Hopper pleaded fear of excitement, apprehension of apoplexy, or sudden attack of other ailments to which he was subject. During one of Mr. Stewart's terribly soul-stirring exhortations, however, the invalid forgot his fears in the intense anxiety which he experienced, and slowly moving up the aisle of the church, he bowed an humble

suppliant at the feet of Jesus, his long neglected friend. The work was now commenced. In a few weeks it ran "like fire in a dry stubble," through all the circuit, and continuing to burn with an increasing conflagration of divine love upon each Christian's heart, scores and hundreds were sanctified from all inbred impurity, while Heaven's glorified choristers doubtless made the celestial arches ring with a loud, triumphant song of jubilee.

Father Hopper was not injured by the experiment of going to the altar; on the contrary, supernatural strength was vouchsafed, by which, in a few minutes, he was enabled to lay hold on the hope of the gospel and claim the blessed promise, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" in a consciousness of which, he praised God for all the unnumbered mercies of the past and the salvation through Christ's blood, of which he knew himself a favored partaker by the clear, indisputable witness of the Holy Spirit. He attained his eightieth year, and died to receive the reward of the sanctified.

The following conference year, Mr. Bartine became a supernumerary, and retired to his farm near Princeton to await the call of his Lord to a better country. How delightful must have been the recollection of that last successful year to this time honored minister, and with what rapture will he hail on the slopes of immortality the children with whom God blessed his ministry upon Freehold Circuit!

The circuit was re-arranged and made "a six

weeks territory;" Revs. James Long and Mulford Day were appointed as coadjutors of Mr. Stewart, the former assuming the charge. Mr. Long came, a widower with one daughter, and before the elapse of a year, married an estimable lady at an appointment on the Shirk River. Mr. Day brought a loved companion and three children; five weeks subsequent to his arrival, in the soft dawn of summer, when bright green verdure clothed the trees and the first roses were shedding their fragrance, the wife and mother received a summons from the spirit land, and she smiled upon and bade adieu to her earth-treasures, and went away with angels to Jesus.

> Early, bright, transient, chaste as morning dew,
> She sparkled, was exhaled, and went to heaven.

This year the work continued to revive, and three hundred were added to the church, such as it was hoped should be eternally saved, reaching the round number of *one thousand converts* in the two years of Mr. Stewart's sojourn upon that circuit. With his colleagues in 1833, he enjoyed perfect and uninterrupted harmony; the three ambassadors of God worked hard together, and worked hard *perpetually*, as men burdened with a ponderous weight of responsibility; as men *willing* to "endure all things that they also might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

These soldiers in the army of Israel have all passed away from earth, and doubtless shout the praises of him whose gospel they faithfully preached,

in the immediate and glorious presence of THE CRUCIFIED. Joyous thought! Oh, let those who heard their holy voices emulate their graces, and remembering the words of counsel that fell from their lips, strive in the strength of the Omnipotent to *work* out their salvation, treasuring the blessed sentiment of the apostle, "Be not weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Have any apostatized? Let them think of those men who labored for their conversion with exhortations; faithful exhortations and prayers, strong cries and tears, unremitting efforts and visitation. But above all, recollecting *the sufferings of the dear Son of God*, let them place their cause once again in his hands and cry:—

> Return, O holy Dove, return,
> Sweet messenger of rest;
> I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
> And drove thee from my breast.

Mr. Stewart's diary of May 25th, says:—

"Preached at Littleton Herbert's, away down in the pines, to a few souls almost starving for the bread of life. Speaker and hearers were profited. Put up at Moses Bennet's, where I was treated like a king, *too* well for one so unworthy as I. Am only twelve miles from my good friends at Tom's River, would dearly love to run over and see them!

"26th. Preached at Brother Bennet's this evening. A powerful time. One *old* sinner cried aloud for mercy! We had a meeting after the style of those

witnessed by Benjamin Abbott. The saints were not ashamed to *shout*."

June 3d. He says: "I am at High Point. Preached this morning. The Spirit of the Lord was present. Many wept; others shouted; penitents moaned on account of broken hearts! Rode through rain, and preached at Bethany in the evening. Afterwards led class; the power of God descended; we had a time long to be remembered, because of the presence of the Comforter. People were shouting in all parts of the house; some fell prostrate, and lay upon the floor like dead men; others sang, prayed, and rejoiced, till 2 o'clock in the morning! Two rebels were converted after midnight, and forthwith following (unconsciously) the example of their preacher, assumed the prerogative of exhorter, and besought their friends to seek the Saviour in the pardon of their sins. The wicked heard, felt, and trembled. *We shall have a great work here!*

"June 5th. Preached this evening at Brother Fountain's, seven miles from Middletown Point. Here I saw a very singular phenomenon, or else it was an optical delusion. A streak of fire came through the ceiling, and passed down through the floor of the apartment in which we were assembled! The effect I am positive was not a delusion—the people fell all over the floor! I closed the Bible, and surrendered to the workings of the Spirit! The Lord was preaching in his own way! Saints were powerfully blest, sinners were convicted, and the little society in this neighborhood was built up.

"June 6th. Preached at Benjamin Brown's. God was there, and his power was felt. Tears were shed plentifully. A Presbyterian brother who had come in among us, said: 'We had a good time.'

"June 7th. Preached at Mount Pleasant. The people present were much engaged. *Three good sisters walked twelve miles!* Four others walked eight miles! I remarked—'You come a long distance, sisters.' 'Bless God,' said they, 'we have meeting all the way home.'

"June 10th. Preached at Long Branch in the morning, Rumson in the afternoon, and at 'the Branch' again in the evening. Two were converted to night, and thirty fell beneath the mighty power of the Spirit."

O God, thou art my God alone,
  Early to thee my soul shall cry;
A pilgrim in a land unknown,
  A thirsty land, whose springs are dry.

Thee, in the watches of the night,
  When I remember on my bed;
Thy presence makes my darkness light,
  Thy guardian wings are round my head.

Better than life itself thy love,
  Dearer than all beside to me;
For whom have I in heaven above,
  Or what on earth compared with thee?

CHAPTER VII.

FREEHOLD AND TUCKERTON CIRCUITS.

Letter to James Folwell—Mr. Stewart at Long Branch—Kind friends—William Throckmorton robbed by three ministers—Death of a saint—Conversion of his brother—A letter—Revival at Squankum—Hance Herbert—A ball-room changed into a prayer-room—Eatontown—William Rodgers—Joseph Goodenough—Tuckerton Circuit—Illness of Mr. Stewart—Letter—Appointed to New Egypt, but returns to Manahocking.

To Mr. Folwell, under date of August 6th, Mr. Stewart writes:—

DEAR BROTHER: Agreeably to my promise, I embrace this opportunity, indeed I should say seize the moment to write you, for my time has been so much engrossed with preaching and in pulpit preparation that I have scarcely been able to call time *mine*. The great Head of the church is pouring out his spirit in an unusual manner. Hundreds are seeking the salvation of their souls on this circuit. I preached last Tuesday at a place where the congregation has increased in fifteen months, *from twenty to five hundred!* Oh, James, it is astonishing to see the overwhelming power of God in its operations upon sinners! Woe is depicted in the faces of our

weeping, wondering audiences. At one village there are only remaining six unconverted, unmarried individuals. The older people look on, and I fear they will only "look on," till it is too late! In Bethany we have received forty new members. At almost every meeting some receive a change of heart. I am not well, but when preaching, am in my element. This is the course in which I wish to spend my life! Our camp-meeting commences the third of September. Write your preachers to attend, we shall need their help. Please have it published in your meetings, and affectionately invite the friends for me. I am to preach this evening elevem miles from home. I cannot employ anybody to do *my* preaching. I hope to see your sister Ann before her return to her home in Wilmington. I have not forgotten my cordial reception into her house at conference. May a kind Providence smooth her path to a happier clime! I often fancy myself seated under your trees conversing with you. Tell Elizabeth, that though I feel unworthy of it, I am not insensible to her kindness. When I have leisure I will again write.

I am yours affectionately,

THOS. G. STEWART.

Through the whole of these two years, Mr. Stewart continued his public ministrations without the slightest abatement. Day and night, early and late, he was driving through sunshine and rain, mud and water, with the precious name of Jesus forever on

his lips. He seldom omitted preaching once every week day and thrice on the Sabbath. His prolonged absence from home was painfully felt by Mrs. Stewart, and "the rest week" was hailed by his children with unutterable delight. When, after watching anxiously from the windows, his beloved form was at length descried, they ran to meet him, and embracing him in turn, shed tears of inexpressible joy upon his bosom.

In his long ministerial career, habit never, to his wife, seemed to decrease the pain of separation, although with four children to care for and look after, every hour was in a great measure occupied. She had kind and attentive neighbors in the families of William Throckmorton, Philip Dennis, Michael Mapps, and John Hopper, all of whom by this pleasant connection became greatly endeared to her. While it was evident to all that her husband had but one object in view—the salvation of men and the glory of God—it was equally plain that she strove only to render herself a child of heaven and a proper helpmeet for an old-fashioned Methodist preacher.

Brother William Throckmorton, though not "an officer," nor even what, in the usual acceptation of the term, is styled "an active member" in the church, was *an humble benefiter;* the entire extent of whose utility *for* the church will never be known in this world. His house was, during twenty-five years, the home of the ministers of the gospel; in it was an apartment called "The Preachers' Room," pro-

vided with books, stove, sofa, &c., and set apart for the exclusive occupancy of the fraternity in their periodical visitations. Three among the entertained clergy expressed the gratitude of their insatiate hearts in a peculiar manner, each *robbing* the generous man of one of his *household treasures.* Samuel, his eldest son, was consecrated to the sacred office. He entered the itinerancy in his twenty-second year. In two short years he returned to his father's house, rendered inadequate to his labors from the effect of a hemorrhage. This was in 1829. Four years he lingered upon the earth a patient sufferer. His confidence was strong for the realization of the truth of the glorious apostolic declaration, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

When this young man, who had been resolved upon "doing the work of an evangelist, and giving full proof of his ministry," felt that his dissolution was near, he, in prospect of a speedy union with the Saviour, experienced a sweet peace, and a celestial hope, and exercised an invincible faith which averted every peculiar temptation that usually signalizes the last ferocious attack of our inveterate foe. Samuel Throckmorton, from the first, betrayed an uncompromising antagonism for the arch enemy, which he was never known to shrink from after the hour of his conversion.

He calmly bade each member of the family farewell, and passed away on the evening of the 7th of February, 1833. He exhorted his junior brother, who

was still "an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenant of promise," to delay no longer a preparation for that change which must sooner or later pass upon all. Mrs. Stewart, who was present, and closed the eyes of the deserted body, attests that all, within the solemn inclosure of that room from which the freed spirit took its joyous flight, realized the truth of the sentiment—

> "The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
> Is privileged beyond the common walk
> Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven."

The Sabbath of Samuel's burial, the brother yielded his heart, so long withheld from its rightful possessor, and became a happy recipient of his pardoning love. A glorious revival ensued, and thirty-three united with the church at Long Branch.

A letter written to a friend, dated January 25th, betrays the feeling of brotherly affection, humility, and rejoicing in hope, which always pervaded Mr. Stewart's heart.

DEAR BROTHER: I received your acceptable letter in the month of December. It was very gratifying to a heart like mine; it shows what power religion possesses to cement the hearts of strangers. No longer strangers, but brethren of "the household of faith." The Christian's heart breathes a language sweet as that of angels. I think of you all in that country frequently—of the interesting seasons of Christian intercourse we have enjoyed. Your letter wakes many tender recollections. I have been ac-

customed to privations, but that of not beholding the faces of my Christian friends is the most severe I ever endured. I have some faithful correspondents that now and then send "a wish and a thought after me," and oh! how welcome are the little messengers. Sometimes, when traveling alone, I draw out these letters and read them over and over again. But, dear brother, if we walk through deep waters, the deliverance will be the greater; the contrast of extreme suffering here and the glory of the upper kingdom will be very striking. A man with a craving appetite enjoys eating, an individual suffering with cold enjoys the fire; if we *suffer* for the gospel's sake, what will we not enjoy in *resting* with God in heaven.

I love to tell the story of the manger and the cross; the path of duty is, to me, a field of glory. *Here* let me triumph. The Christian has a guide; he has supplies—he is not solitary. "Behold," says God to Israel, "I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." What encouragement for the Christian to be faithful till death. All is well this side the grave, all is triumph beyond. Oh, Heaven! death no more; sin barred out *forever*. Eternity of bliss! "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man the things prepared for them that love him." Hallelujah! Amen!

Think of this, oh! brother, and let us stand up to our work. My father and mother are now both dead; I trust they are in heaven. I expect to join them. Tell *your* dear mother I am grateful for the

affection she entertains for a poor ambassador of the cross, and that she thinks me worthy of her friendly notice. Remember me kindly to all who inquire about me. I have heard from nobody but you in that neighborhood for a long time—tell me how they are; I need not name them—I love every one, I am bound to them by ties of a spiritual nature, and these ties time nor death can sunder. I have much to say, but hope soon to see you face to face. Adieu.

Your very affectionate brother,

THOS. G. STEWART.

Upon the occasion of Mr. Stewart's first preaching at Squankum, which was a Sabbath day appointment, his heart fainted within him to behold the religious sterility of the neighborhood, and the fearful torpor which seemed to have settled down with almost universal sanction, upon the professing men and women of the community. He conferred with the preacher in charge, and informed him that of fifty members only *eleven* were sufficiently interested for their souls' welfare, or zealous for God's Kingdom, to attend meeting in the church. This was a manifestly deplorable state of affairs. What should be done? After a number of suggestions had been made and seriously revolved; facts had been brought forward, and reflected upon; the immediate necessities of the case taken into profound consideration, a series of evening meetings was appointed, and Mr. Stewart deputed to carry them forward.

The first week of this extra effort he alternated

in the pulpit with Joseph Goodenough, a local brother, residing in the village. During the prayer meetings, from the scarcity of praying members, he was accustomed to alternate with the few who lifted their heart and voice to "the throne of the heavenly grace;" sometimes exercising in this capacity half a dozen times or more in one evening. The second week William Rodgers, a local preacher from Turkey, reinforced the strength at Squankum, and the meetings increased rapidly in interest and numbers. The third week, the Spirit of the Lord began to be poured out in answer to the fervent, effectual prayers of these servants of God. Weak saints were strengthened, backsliders were reclaimed, sinners convicted and brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, and *hundreds* of rejoicing Christians assembled nightly in the village temple. Mr. Hance Herbert, a gentleman of wealth and influence, who had, for a number of years attended the Methodist Church on the Sabbath, and given of his substance toward the support of the gospel, was personally appealed to by Mr. Stewart in the public congregation, and subsequently visited upon his farm, where with that warmth of feeling and enthusiastic solicitude which characterized this persevering man, he urged upon his awakened friend the importance of setting out to serve the Lord Jesus Christ *now!* "It must be *an instantaneous act;* why do men when appealed to say, *In the future I will follow Jesus.* How many hundreds of awakened sinners have learned, alas! too late, the truth of the line—

"'Procrastination is the thief of time.'

Doubtless hundreds are to-day lifting up their eyes in torment, and calling for water to cool their tongue, who uttered that fatal sentence—*I will turn in with the offers of mercy, but not just now.*" Mr. Herbert, with commendable resolution, commenced to seek the favor of God, through the atoning Son, at the instance of Mr. Stewart. He felt that the love which Christ conferred upon this servant of God, to induce him to visit and implore him, with the superior excellence of character which was betrayed, to fly from his present dangerous position, *must* be more than terrestrial in its nature; and in all his life having never yet been perfectly happy, nor even contented, he believed that religion was "the one thing needful." He came out boldly on the Lord's side, and others followed his salutary example. A son-in-law and a daughter were converted and connected themselves, among forty-eight others, with the society at Squankum. His estimable lady, who for many years had been a member of the Baptist church, transferred her seat to the Methodist church, and henceforward worshipped in "spirit and in truth" with her rejoicing family.

Before the conclusion of this meeting, the congregation became too large for the dimensions of the church; a temporary shed was erected in an adjoining woods, under which the people gathered and listened with eager ears to the preaching of the gospel as it fell from the lips of its holy expounders.

The landlord of the village inn was attracted thither, and was led to a troubled consciousness of his sinful and perilous condition. After the pro-

tracted meetings terminated, a large apartment in the public house, formerly designated by the suggestive cognomen of "the Ball Room," was thrown open for prayer-meetings; and Hance Herbert rejoiced in being appointed leader of this beneficial means of grace. Thus was the deformed moral aspect of "a valley of dry bones," changed to a land plentifully watered by streams of flowing, exhilarating waters. Joseph Goodenough and William Rodgers were extraordinary men. They bore the impress of that early class of Methodist preachers who "counted not their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify of the gospel of the grace of God." The former was always ready to open his mouth to tell of Christ's sufferings and death for "a world lying in wickedness;" the latter had only to be apprised of a vacancy at any appointment on the circuit, to order his horse and gallop off thirty or forty miles and proclaim the blessings of the gospel to the best of his abilities, which were considered by no means indifferent. The material aid thus furnished the traveling preacher was beyond computation, and the good works of these brethren will doubtless follow them. Mr. Stewart returned to Long Branch after this extraordinary manifestation of God's power, as he declared, "uninjured by his extensive laborings, and with his spirit rather refreshed than exhausted by incessant exercises in the pulpit, and on the platform, in the midst of dense assemblies."

From Squankum the attention of the colleagues was turned to Eatontown. A few weeks after we find Mr. Stewart writing from this place to a brother on Allentown Circuit.

DEAR BROTHER: I sit down to inform you in a few words what we have been doing lately on this circuit. In the last three weeks our revival has progressed in Eatontown. Here have assembled the largest congregations to which I ever preached except, perhaps, in the woods at camp-meeting. Some of the brethren who could lay aside their temporal business, have done so, and have gone from place to place, endeavoring to do good in the name of God. Christians of other denominations have opened their doors to us. This is the true spirit. Sometimes we are compelled to go into the woods to give the people a chance to hear. Ninety-eight have joined the Church in this vicinity, during the last eleven days. If you wish, as you intimate, that I may be present at your dedication services, they must be upon a week-day, as it would be impossible for me to leave my appointments on the Sabbath. When I see you I will pay my subscription. Pardon me for not writing sooner and more; my constant engagements prevent.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

THOS. G. STEWART.

One appointment succeeding another was visited by these untiring ambassadors (local and itinerant),

until the result, as has been stated, was an ingathering of hundreds of precious souls, for whom Jesus poured out his life-blood on Calvary. The secret of the wonderful success which attended the preaching of the Word on Freehold Circuit was this: clergy and laity came up in extended and mighty phalanx, "to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

Mr. Stewart, surveying with tearful eye and thankful heart the general field, at the termination of his ministrations among this united people, could not withhold the exclamation—"What hath God wrought?" The circuit loomed up before his mind, a tower of spiritual strength; joined, compact, energetic, rejoicing in past success, confidently trusting in the almighty arm of Jehovah for the future. He was now fairly introduced into all the minutiæ of the traveling preacher's toils, trials, and perplexities; but he declared that the joy, peace, and *glory*, which he experienced in his heart continually, so completely overbalanced the opposite scale that the weight of its contents was scarcely perceptible.

To one of his nature, possessing an affection almost effeminate, bound to hundreds by the strongest tie that may cement hearts on earth—Christian love—the feelings of his soul, at parting, were indescribable, unutterable, unimaginable. But this was placed in "the trial balance," and when he contemplated the extensive fields of prospective labor ahead, and the short period allotted to him on earth to do his Master's business, he smiled a glad adieu to the many friends who extended the parting hand, bade

them God-speed toward the better land, and hastened away to preach Christ crucified to strange hearts and unfamiliar faces.

The pecuniary interests of the ministers were nobly and liberally responded to on Freehold Circuit; nevertheless, many *substantial demonstrations of private regard* were made, from time to time, by individuals. John Hopper, at Mr. Stewart's departure, placed in his hand a memorial, which more than served the purpose for which it was offered, and elicited the strongest gratitude of the recipient's heart.

Upon the district included in this circuit, and over which three preachers presided, are now *ten* stationed pastors, ministering in holy things "to a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Long Branch seceded from the circuit in 1834, and Rev. J. K. Shaw was appointed to its first exclusive charge. He was, as he declared to his flock, "a tender and loving spiritual *step-father*;" and by the assistance of the Omnipotent, in whom alone he trusted, nearly the whole of "the lambs" were preserved from escaping out of the fold of the church, and from the arms of the Shepherd.

Red Bank, Middletown Point, Key Port, and other of the old appointments, now individually support their preachers; and scores of the children of those noble Christians of 1832 and 1833 live in the church, monuments of the truth of the proverb: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." At the Conference in

Philadelphia, which set April 9th, 1834, Mr. Stewart was ordained an elder, and sent to Tuckerton Circuit, intrusted with the new responsibility of "preacher in charge," with Rev. J. W. McDougal as colleague. He accepted the superintendency with reluctance, although willing to serve his brethren in whatever capacity they saw proper to appoint him. He loved to call sinners to repentance; to advise, counsel, and administer gentle reproof; but to preside, chief arbiter, at trials of erring Christians, and to be called to decide according to the convictions of his mind, which might be *against* the unfortunate accused, was strongly averse to his inclinations. He, however, received the office submissively, and resolved to discharge this, and every other duty imposed upon him, according to the persuasion of his mind, under the guidance of God.

He removed from Long Branch to Manahocking, and upon reconnoitring his ground, which was rather *a line* than *a circuit*, the appointment lying in a continuous northerly direction along Barnegat Bay, he saw that labors of undiminished magnitude awaited him. The principal preaching places were Manahocking, Tuckerton, Barnegat, Fork River, Good Luck, West Creek, Dover Chapel, Green Bank, Bass River, and Wiretown. These, with sundry school-house missions, presented a field sufficiently extended to banish all fears of *ennui*, or tendency to supineness, from the mind of the colleagues. The reports of Mr. Stewart's doings elsewhere, having excited general attention in that part of the country,

and stimulated the curiosity of some, the desire to hear him preach was universal, especially among the religious classes.

His family arrived in the town, which was to be their residence for the ensuing two years, on Tuesday, April 22d. Wednesday was passed in disposing the furniture, and Thursday he went forth to bear his first message to the people committed to his charge. *He was absent a week.*

In Manahocking, Mrs. Stewart found warm and solicitous friends, both among the Methodists and Baptists, between whom the inhabitants were about equally divided. The families of Joseph Randolph and John Cranmer were ever borne in lively and grateful remembrance, on account of their kindly proofs of esteem, and the Christian intercourse which was enjoyed. "Father Cranmer," by whom the minds of the minister's children were gratuitously instructed, and who evinced a paternal interest in their progress, was long remembered by the favored of his goodness.

David Lowry, a liberal Presbyterian, frequently attended the Methodist Church, and, at the return of each "quarterly meeting," sent for Mrs. Stewart, to whom he donated the generous amount with which he assessed himself, in parcels of dry-goods, from the shelves of his store.

The family of Judge Oliphant, although, like Mr. Lowry's, of a different religious creed, also displayed the beauty of the genuine Christian character and spirit, by assisting in the propagation of the glorious

gospel, through liberal donations to the Methodist preacher.

On Tuckerton Circuit, Mr. Stewart encountered but little opposition to the cause of Methodism. This sect, of which Father Boem had been the chief representative, the year previous, had penetrated and reformed almost every corner of the tract along the bay. In the village of Tuckerton, there were a few Baptists, and a small church, but *the waters were seldom troubled.*

Isaac Jenkins, an old class-leader at this place, was one of the men of that age of whom the world seemed scarcely worthy. He was a man against whom none could bring a just accusation, either in reference to his religious character, or to his temporal business transactions. His house was, during many years, the home of the traveling preachers; and the extraordinary kindness of his good wife is remembered till the present time by many an appreciative and thankful heart. At Green Bank, resided the great-souled Nicholas Sooy, who erected, with the means which God had given him, a neat church, supplied the necessary fuel from his lands, and lights from his storehouse, to a congregation whose limited numbers, and equally small means, proscribed that liberality which they had it in their hearts to exercise. Brother Sooy's roof was also the frequent shelter of the itinerant, and his bounty to the Methodists, in that early day, will never be forgotten by those who enjoyed its cordiality.

At the Dover Chapel was another champion of

Methodism, in the person of Job Potter. He died but a short time since, in the full triumph of faith, over ninety years of age. At West Creek was Joel Haywood, a local preacher, whose willing aid, and not indifferent talents, were frequently called into requisition upon the circuit. To these holy men Mr. Stewart became warmly attached, and in retrospecting his twenty-four months upon the shore of Barnegat Bay, was always accustomed to speak of them in tones of highest commendation and love. At Bass River, there was a Friends' meeting-house, which, not being used by that sect in the evenings, was, with commendable liberality, offered to the Methodists for public services, until a church, proposed to be erected, should be complete. Within this orthodox enclosure, where, until that time, supreme silence had reigned, almost without interruption, Mr. Stewart preached, in his peculiar "clamorous" style, until sinners were awakened and converted, and those old, quiet walls fairly shook again with the shouts of souls rejoicing in possession of the earnest of that inheritance which is "incorruptible and undefiled." During the first year upon this circuit, gracious revivals prevailed in several places, the result, doubtless, of the strength of the full purpose which was put forth by the co-laborers in the service of the Lord. The last week in May, Mr. Stewart attended the Bargaintown camp-meeting; but few preachers were present, and his ear, always open to the application of an emergency, listened with compliance to the requests of

his brethren; he preached four times in as many days; labored in the only way it was possible for him to labor, "with his might," and returned home, sick!

The powers of the strongest men have their limits; Mr. Stewart, after the Bargaintown camp-meeting, was confined to his room four weeks—the result of a second hemorrhage. He was never restored to that degree of strength which he previously enjoyed; but as soon as convalescence sanctioned, he stood again at his loved post, to preach the Gospel of Christ, and to show the sinner "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb."

He had always been scrupulously diligent in fulfilling his appointments in his own circuit, and it was a source of the severest deprivation for him to be compelled to restrain himself from speaking for a few weeks. Until sufficiently recovered to preach "a full sermon," he traveled as much as ever he had done, desiring to be present with the people of his beloved congregation, and assure them, in a few sentences, that "God hath power on earth to forgive sins," and that he does not, as an earthly physician, "heal the hurt of the daughter of my people *slightly*," but, with the application of the infallible Balm that is in Gilead, "makes the wounded *every whit whole*."

From every sickness by God's word,
From every foul disease
Saved, and to perfect health restored,
To perfect holiness.

Who walks in glorious liberty,
To sin entirely dead;
The truth, the Son hath made him free,
And he is free indeed.

A letter to James Folwell, bearing date of Nov. 6.

DEAR BROTHER: I returned from the south part of my circuit on the 3d inst., and found your affectionate letter awaiting me. I was much gratified to hear from my friends in that place. It is storming this morning, and I seize the moments of leisure thereby afforded me, to communicate with you. The affection which your letter breathes sinks me into the dust of humility. What am I that I should be thus esteemed? Yet your kindness could not lodge in a breast that would more highly appreciate it. Fain would I make a suitable return, were I able. Jesus said, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Some have been compelled to endure the animosity of a sinful world; but I, the chief of unworthy ones, am treated *well* by saint and sinner. God is good to me; the tears fill my eyes often when I think of it. Christians of various orders solicit my poor assistance, and they pour their blessings upon my unworthy head. I trust I shall prove to the world by my pious zeal that I am not altogether unworthy the confidence they repose in me, and that my persevering efforts for the generation I profess to serve, will show that I am a lover of the souls of mankind. I intend that all I have—my property, life, interest, influence, all—shall go towards the advancement of man's religious condition and

the glory of God. I have long since shaken hands with and bade farewell to earthly pleasures; I wear the world as a loose garment, ready to lay it aside at any time.

The Lord pours out his spirit; every revolution we make on the circuit brings a number of souls into the fold of Christ. Last week I delivered ten regular sermons, besides exhortations and leading of classes. My strength is according to my day. It is doubtless in answer to prayer that I am supported; I believe that a thousand prayers are offered for me each day of my life.

I travel through all kinds of weather. I am constantly exposed to sudden changes, from heated churches to damp air, storms and sea-fogs, all of which are severe tests of the constitution; I am sustained supernaturally. Perhaps I may be wooing a disease that will become seated, prey upon my system, and bring me eventually to the grave. What is the grave? It 's conquered, sanctified and perfumed by the blood of Jesus, for his saints to slumber in till the resurrection. It was not in my power to attend your quarterly meeting; in fact I did not receive your invitation till the day it commenced. Be assured it would afford me indescribable pleasure to visit your place; but the friends here are not willing that I should preach off the circuit. I am laboring among a lovely people, who show every mark of affection, and do all they can to make me happy and comfortable. But I cannot forget my old friends. My heart often travels over to Imlaystown and lin-

gers by the friendly fireside. You say I have friends there that love me. Oh! I wish I was more worthy of it. You speak of your mother. The very name "mother" is cheering. I scarcely know the value of a mother, but oh! I know full well the want of one. I am without father or mother, but they that do the will of my Father in heaven, are my mother and sister and brother. I acknowledge my feeling of gratitude to your sister Elizabeth for sending me a few lines to comfort and cheer my heart. She alludes to the interest I have taken in her eternal welfare. It makes me happy to be the instrument in rendering others so. If I have been of service to her for spiritual good, the reflection will console my heart. There is no question in my mind about recollecting in eternity the things of time, and if I may be the happy instrument in inducting you and her to the clime of bliss, I shall indeed rejoice, with no common joy in that upper kingdom. The moments I have been permitted to pass with you have been profitable ones—particularly so was the last half hour I passed in your company.

Oh! my friends make an entire surrender of your hearts to God; dedicate your lives, time, talents to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not only be willing, but ready, to take up the cross (though persecutions surround you) and bear it. The Duke of Buckingham, when he had offended the king, prostrated himself at the feet of his sovereign and exclaimed, "Until I receive your gracious pardon, here will I lie." *We* are such subjects to Christ;

lying at his feet, we implore forgiveness, and never rise till assured of pardon. Make all sacrifice for Christ; confront bravely all opposition, be fervent in prayer, unwavering in faith, and the word of the Lord must fail, or you will find *all consolation* in Christ. Tell Susan how I long for her salvation. Let us prepare, all of us, for heaven. The prince of Latin poets said, "I am writing for eternity." Let us remember that we are *living* for eternity.

When a few more days are wasted,
When a few more springs are o'er,
When a few more griefs we've tasted,
We shall rise to grieve no more!

I have been called upon to solemnize the rite of matrimony about seven miles distant, to-day. I hope it will clear away. Do not forget me at a throne of grace.

Your unworthy, yet affectionate friend,

THOS. G. STEWART.

Mr. Stewart attended Conference March 30th, 1835. It met at Philadelphia. The Bishop appointed him to New Egypt Circuit, in response to a petition of the people. After the adjournment of the session, a good brother who resided within ten miles of this circuit, and who had a son lying so ill with consumption that it was thought dangerous to remove him, had an interview with the Bishop, explained the peculiar circumstances of the case, and asked to be favored by a change of his new

appointment to New Egypt, so that his pastoral duties might be discharged without removal. The episcopal power was inclined to favor the applicant, and Mr. Stewart, passive in the matter, returned to his home in Manahocking, girded on the panoply of a soldier of Christ, and rode forth to resume command of his subordinate forces upon the field of his last year's victories.

His colleague, during the first six months, was Rev. Robert E. Morrison; during the last six, Joseph Atwood, a young man sent out from Tuckerton, under the presiding elder of the district.

A camp-meeting held near Barnegat in August of this year, was blessed in the conversion of a number of souls and the general revivifying of the church. The cause of temperance rapidly advanced, and Mr. Stewart was repeatedly called upon to exercise in this primary department of Christianity. He applied himself to the work with his distinguishing reformatory ardor, and fruit was given him of his labor, many being induced to sign the abstinence pledge, and some, before his departure from the circuit, became hopeful converts of the Christian religion.

He concluded his last year in the Tuckerton Circuit as he began the first, in strenuous and continued efforts to edify the Kingdom of Christ, not only in numbers of justified, but in the purification of believers. He left this people, to whom he had become very strongly attached, with a confident hope, which he joyously expressed, of a glorious reunion "beyond this vale of tears." He employed

at the termination of his labors, that hymn which thousands have heard him sing, while tears rolled down his face and his heart was too deeply affected for utterance.

And let our bodies part,
To different climes repair,
Inseparably joined in heart
The friends of Jesus are.
Jesus the corner stone,
Did first our hearts unite,
And still he keeps our spirits one
Who walk with him in white.

Oh! let us still proceed
In Jesus' work below,
And following our triumphant head,
To further conquests go.
The vineyard of the Lord
Before his laborers lies,
And lo! we seek the vast reward
Which waits us in the skies.

Oh! let our heart and mind
Continually ascend,
That haven of repose to find
Where all our labors end.
Where all our toils are o'er,
Our suffering and our pain,
Who meet on that eternal shore,
Shall never part again.

Oh! happy, happy place,
Where saints and angels meet!
There we shall see each other's face,
And all our brethren greet.
The church of the first-born,
We shall with them be blessed,
And crown'd with endless joy, return
To our eternal rest.

With joy we shall behold,
In yonder blest abode,
The patriarchs and prophets old,
And all the saints of God.
Abr'am and Isaac there,
And Jacob shall receive
The followers of their faith and prayer
Who now in bodies live.

We shall our time beneath
Live out in cheerful hope,
And fearless pass the vale of death,
And gain the mountain top.
To gather home his own
God shall his angels send,
And bid our bliss, on earth begun,
In deathless triumph end.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. STEWART ON CROSSWICKS AND NEW EGYPT CIRCUITS.

Abolitionism—Revival at Sharon—Conversion and death of two young ladies—Euphemia Miller—A church erected in three months—Revival in Allentown—Miss Catharine D.—Influence of one Christian—Letters—Removes to New Egypt—Limited quarters—A parsonage built—Church burnt—Cookstown camp-meeting—George R.—Charles Downs with Mr. Stewart—Holiness—A troublesome colleague—Illness—Letter—Visiting among all classes—Extract from diary—Reliable and practical faith—Stanzas.

THE Conference, in 1836, directed Mr. Stewart to labor in Crosswicks Circuit. He had no colleague this year. His family were removed to Allentown, in which place he found a large church, about one hundred members, and a people, for the most part, sociable and spiritual. The appointments were Allentown, Crosswicks, Hightstown, Sharon, Groveville, Centreville, and several minor places yet worshipping in school-houses. Abolitionism, in its most excitable form, was at that time visiting the Northern States, and some of the appointments upon this circuit were convulsed by it. At Allentown, a few had

withdrawn their names from the church, avowing their intention to unite with some sect which did not favor slavery by an union with the South. Mr. Stewart's heart was deeply grieved by this deplorable aspect of affairs on his new charge. He was pained that men for whom Methodism had done everything, should desert its ranks for reasons, which, to his mind, seemed so trivial. He did not, however, enter into any private or public discussions on the subject; but praying earnestly to the God of Jacob, armed himself anew with the weapons of spiritual warfare, and went forth with undiminished faith and vigor to battle against Satan, in any form in which he might clothe himself. The people soon perceived that he was a man come from God; his words were accompanied by a divine authority and gracious unction—he went around his circuit the first time, calling continually upon God to direct and assist him. Mr. Stewart never, perhaps, felt a greater sense of nothingness than at this time; he was "instant in prayer," and *waited on his ministry without a day's cessation!* Plenteously anointed with holy oil, he proclaimed the jubilee of the gospel, the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of deliverance to all that believed; constantly urging his hearers, "not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good." The result of this course was the most desirable; the attention of Christians was drawn to the work of salvation, and the abolition movement was made subservient to the impulses of the Christian religion. His first revival was at Sharon. Robert

Miller, Daniel Bowman and John Story were among the leading men of the appointment. They were abundant in labors for the saving of their unconverted friends—their doors were always open to the ministers of the gospel, and a liberal proportion of their means was given to the church.

About forty, through the united effort of preacher and people, were taken into probationary membership at Sharon. Among the number were two young ladies, daughters of Presbyterians. They were not denied the privilege of attending the Methodist church by their parents, although entertaining a different creed, and this liberality resulted in the thorough conversion of both to the religion of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Less than twelve months afterwards, the elder sister died, rejoicing in prospect of a blissful immortality beyond the grave. Two young ladies of the name of Hulett gave their hearts to the Saviour, and were also made joyful recipients of Jesus' pardoning love, and one of these was called away from earth *in less than six months* after her conversion. Mr. Stewart visited her during her illness, which was summary and severe, and he found her calm, patient, and resigned to that divine will, into which she had, by the grace of God, merged her own, at the altar of Sharon Church. Oh! blessed *must* be the Christian's death, if faithful to the grace conferred. Triumphant were the last moments of these two young ladies—both were perfectly content to rely upon the God who had delivered them from the bondage of sin; neither doubted but that

Christ, who had *promised* to conduct safely through "the dark valley," was abundantly able, and would also perform that guiding service. In addressing the young, Mr. Stewart often referred to this coincidence on Crosswicks Circuit.

Euphemia Miller, a sister of Robert, was an invaluable assistant at this revival; she visited those awakened by the Holy Spirit, encouraged the mourner in Zion, and wrestled in secret with the angel of God for a speedy and powerful outpouring of forgiving love upon all, inquiring what they must do to be saved. In promoting the work of the Lord, Mr. Stewart loved to see employed the talents of the local preachers, leaders, and the exemplary sisters; in prayer, and in such other ways as might conduce to the honor of the spiritual kingdom, and the glory of God. In this way he thought lukewarmness was destroyed, a holy union engendered, and individual zeal maintained.

As an overseer of souls, Mr. Stewart frequently visited many families in the course of one day. These visits were short and spiritual. He endeavored to ascertain the religious state of each member of the house, and, in tones of gentleness and love, exhorted the unconverted to seek the favor of God while he was on "the giving hand."

What has been written of William Bramwell, may be said of Mr. Stewart. "He delighted to press the people to believe, but he did not omit to inculcate the weighty matters of the law. He recommended a punctual attendance upon the public means

of grace, but he would not have any duty neglected at home. He insisted upon the necessity of private prayer, but he would not infringe upon the work of searching the Scriptures. He considered the religion of Christ as an empty name, when it was destitute of love: that perfect, powerful, and operative principle, which leads to acts of universal good-will to man. He proclaimed—'Owe no man anything but love.'"

At the second quarterly meeting in Crosswicks Circuit, in the Conference, the question was asked:—

"Where shall our next quarterly meeting be held?"

A brother replied: "At Groveville."

"We have no church there."

"We shall have a church there by the time it is needed."

And, in three months, though at this time there was not a brick laid, nor a piece of lumber upon the ground, the new edifice was complete, and Rev. Richard Petherbridge, the presiding elder, delivered at once the dedication and the quarterly sermon, to a crowded congregation, which had convened from all parts of the circuit.

After Groveville, the next scene of Mr. Stewart's labors was Allentown. Here he was assisted by William Foster, a local preacher, and William I. Brown, Asher Hankison, and John McCabe, class-leaders. He was much esteemed in the town of his residence, and his efforts were peculiarly beneficial, tending to heal the wound which the church had

received from the agitation of the slavery question. He now saw the advantage which had risen from his wise resolution not to engage in any controversy appertaining collaterally to the church and the purer, greater influence he had obtained among the people, by keeping himself unspotted from the world, and only essaying, by the help of God, to rebuild the broken walls of Zion, and bring souls to Christ. Among the converts in Allentown, was Catharine D——. She was visiting in the town; her residence was several miles distant. When first visited by the Holy Spirit's gracious influence, it was proudly and disdainfully thrust aside. Her state of feeling, in regard to the eternal interests of her soul, becoming intolerable, on account of the weight of conscious transgression that pressed upon her, she inquired of a friend: "To whom shall I go for consolation or direction?" She was recommended to consult Mrs. Stewart, and calling upon the minister's wife, she unfolded the exercises of her mind to that lady, who pointed to the Rock that was cleft to receive her, and knelt with the penitent before a throne of grace. Maria Stewart, who was now deeply pious and circumspect in her religious walk, united with her mother in earnest cries and supplications in behalf of Miss D——, and, after an hour spent in this way, she departed, encouraged by a strong hope of pardon, but not yet realizing that indubitable evidence of forgiveness which she was assured it was her blessed privilege to enjoy. During three days, this young lady was unable to eat or sleep, so intense was her

longing after "the consolation of Israel." When, at length, "the opening heavens shone around her with beams of sacred bliss," she shouted aloud the praises of Immanuel's name. Returning to the paternal roof, she informed her family of the wonderful things the Lord had achieved in and for her; and so glowing and eloquent was her language, that two sisters and a brother were speedily "brought to a saving knowledge of the truth," through her example. The fire was spread from that to other domestic circles, and burning on the altar of many sincere hearts, with an increasing conflagration of divine love, the work of conversion yet more widely extended, until, through the instrumentality of the Misses D——, a commodious church was erected, and the Christians of the vicinity worshipped in their own beautiful temple! What may not *one* earnest, working Christian accomplish, if he go forth imbued with the spirit, and assisted by the power of that Being who created and redeemed the world? "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" all over this circuit.

Mr. Stewart, being without assistance, necessarily labored hard, but his heart was abundantly blessed, in that he witnessed the arm of the Lord made bare, and the good pleasure of Christ prosper in his hands. While he was pleasantly and successfully laboring in the Lord's vineyard, he addressed numerous letters to his friends, which showed that, though sometimes rendered unfit for labor, he could not, for a single

day, deprive himself of the pleasure which preaching the gospel afforded him.

To James Folwell, *October* 6.

Dear Brother: I have been several days seeking an opportunity to write you, but constant religious employments have engrossed my time. Be assured I have been prevented from that which would have been a great pleasure to me. But I wish I were more worthy of your attention. How my mind still clings to past scenes and former friends! Since I wrote last, I was called to preach at a place called "Fresh Ponds." On the way I was compelled to cross a small bay or pond in a batteau; I attempted to handle the oars, and sprained my shoulders. The pain occasioned, for several days, was acute as the toothache. I continued preaching, the while, nevertheless. The imperative demand for labors in the gospel kingdom, prompts me to speak, sometimes, when quite weak. Since we separated, I have received about one hundred converted souls into the society, and the work is still progressing. I have witnessed some astonishing displays of the power of the gospel recently; men and women weeping, groaning and agonizing! These sights linger in my mind. Some of the good brethren followed me around from place to place, so interested were they in the work of salvation. I scarcely preach a sermon that some good effect is not produced; yet I never felt my entire dependence on God more sensibly. I am beholding what kings and prophets desired to see, and

my soul is delighted! I am sometimes overwhelmed with the presence and power of him who hath sent me to preach salvation. My memory often recurs to the discourse which, by the help of God, I delivered in Long Branch, when five hundred were powerfully blessed at once! I never saw such a day as that. I was much humbled! Another misfortune or accident befell me lately. I was traveling in my sulky, when my horse took fright and ran at full speed. Observing a narrow bridge ahead, and apprehending an overthrow, I leaped out, and in doing so, injured my leg and head. I was obliged to have recourse to crutches for several days. I think I narrowly escaped death. I have not omitted my appointments, however, although I have delivered my messages standing on one foot. I have preached ten times this week, and must preach this (Saturday) evening, and three times to-morrow. "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few."

If I continue to labor as I have, I know I must go down to the grave in a few years. I am constantly making new acquaintances, who treat me with the kindness of a relative. I thank the Lord for giving me favor in the sight of the people, while I labor in the kingdom and patience of Jesus. Pray for me that I may make full proof of my ministry.

Oh! how little I envy the world, the happiness its unconverted denizens enjoy! I propose to fast oftener in the future than in the past; I long for a more intimate communion with Christ! I strive to seek my all in the Lord! I think I can say that it is my meat

and drink to do his will. Oh! precious gospel! Oh! precious cross! Precious Jesus! May the God of the Christian speed the gospel car, until America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Islands of the Sea shall rejoice that "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth"—and the earth become one universal blaze of glory! My only ambition is to go about doing good. I am willing to suffer, and wait with patience till my change come. I hope we shall share together the bliss of immortality.

I am your humble servant,

THOS. G. STEWART.

To Mrs. Folwell.

My Dear Sister: Your last words have followed me ever since I saw you. You said you were not doing enough in the cause of religion. Experience has taught me that I can enjoy but little of anything when remiss in *the principal thing!* Our Lord said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." A life actively spent in seeking to grow in grace ourselves, and advance piety in others, will not only produce peace of conscience, but bring happiness to the soul, and glory to God! Short of this, a Christian is out of his element—pardon me for speaking so plainly—I venture it on conviction of duty, and a solicitude which I feel for the happiness of a kind friend. I am conscious that I spent many of my early days inactively. Might they have been improved, I had been qualified for eminent usefulness. We cannot, how-

ever, be saved through our good works. If salvation were obtained by our own righteousness, all would fail; yet to claim the promises, we must use the appointed means. Your daughter Susan informed me that she had but little comfort in anything. Elizabeth, who was present, responded—"You should obtain religion, and then you would have *a source* of comfort." This was true; the soul is like Noah's dove; without union with God its preserver, it is always restless and uneasy—the mind is on flight! And while the mind of the sinner is always dissatisfied and stung with bitter chagrin, that of the Christian has immensity of delight! Susan has acted the part of a friend and a sister to me; how then is my soul grieved when I see her, an *enemy of God!* "He that is not for me is against me." I shall pray for her and you. Prayer moves the arm that moves the world. I often try to pray that you may be especially favored of God. What shall content if we have not this? Oh! that Susan, that dear child of affection, may prepare to meet us in heaven. If we get there, there will be no parting. I hope to meet my parents and hear the approbating voice of my Judge!

Here I sit, in the upper chamber of a private family, eight miles from my home and wife: here I sit and view mercy's streams of blood! Come, sister, join me in the sweet meditation. Adieu until I see you.

Yours affectionately,

THOS. G. STEWART.

In the year 1837, the "New Jersey Conference" met for the first time, at Newark. Mr. Stewart's eldest son, James, had now arrived at twenty-one years of age, and returning home on a visit, went in company with Mrs. Stewart and his father, to the session. It commenced on Wednesday, and adjourned the following Monday. Mr. Stewart remarks of this: "Our first session, after the division, was pleasant and even profitable. The missionary meeting, on the closing evening, was especially memorable."

The New Egypt Circuit, which had been cut off from old Pemberton Circuit, this spring again petitioned for him, and he returned, after an absence of six years, to the scene of some of his earliest evangelical labors, this side the mountains. Some of the friends and fellow-helpers of former years had "put off the harness," and were taken to their eternal reward; others welcomed him warmly to their homes, and signified their readiness to enter again the active, united service of delightful memory. Among these were David Applegate, Richard Robbins, and James Wilson, of Imlayshill, Samuel Hendrickson, of Imlaystown, and Daniel Platt, of Jacobstown.

In his former connection with them, Mr. Stewart was "junior preacher;" now, he was superintendent, and in fact *all;* for, during the first nine months, he had no colleague. When earnestly requested by the people, three years previous, a comfortable house had been taken, and everything conveniently arranged to receive his family ceremoniously; but now

apprehensive that their wishes would be unnoticed, this preparation had been neglected, and the minister's family were obliged to contract themselves to the dimensions of two apartments, in the domicil of David Compton, a gentleman in New Egypt, who, though not a professor of religion, betrayed a laudable spirit of accommodation. In a few months, however, a large parsonage was erected, in a beautiful location, adjoining the residence of Dr. George Fort, in the suburbs of the town. There were eleven appointments at this time in New Egypt Circuit, and Mr. Stewart had again an undiminished prospect of labor. He came among the people undaunted by this hard view; declaring that he believed his strength would be according to his day, and boldly avowing to saint and sinner, that he was "determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ, and him *crucified*." The "strifes, envyings, and divisions," which he had been, in his executive character, thus far, called to settle, had all been disposed of quickly, easily, and satisfactorily. The dissensions, which had, at times, risen between parties in the churches over which he had charge, vanished before his salutary, heaven-inspired discourses; the selfish contractions of the heart expanding by his benign influence, and all, becoming as members of one loving family, sitting under the same vine and fig-tree.

At New Egypt, the class-leaders were George Fort, William Creed, and Charles Taylor, all earnest co-laborers with Mr. Stewart in building up the spiritual church, and keeping its members unspotted

from the world. These men were emphatically "God's husbandry."

The first year, a new church was dedicated at Wrightstown, by Rev. David W. Bartine. At Zion, the oldest church upon the circuit, in whose time-honored pulpit Bishop Asbury had raised his trumpet voice, was destroyed by fire. A new building was soon erected, in which many souls were converted in the following year. A camp-meeting was held at Cookstown in August of 1837, and Revs. Richard Petherbridge, James Moore, John Lenheart, and Robert Morrison, with Mr. Stewart, delivered sermons which resulted in the conviction and conversion of scores of souls. The youngest daughter of the last, a little girl, nine years of age, was clearly converted, and expressed the joy of her youthful heart in songs of praise to Him who had loved her and given himself for her. While rejoicing in the happiness which came to her spirit, and telling of the sweetness of the consciousness of pardoned sin, Brother Petherbridge came along, and listening for a moment to the ecstatic words which fell from her lips, exclaimed, "Let men cavil at early piety—*there's a divine reality in that conversion.*"

At Imlaystown, Mr. Stewart was accustomed to put up with Mr. George R., a gentleman whose family were all religious, but who himself, up to this time, had refused to be saved on the terms of the gospel. His wife, and a devotedly pious young lady whom Mr. Stewart has referred to in one of his letters to James Folwell, Miss Mary Ann Potts, now the wife

of a minister in the New Jersey Conference, induced him to attend camp-meeting; earnestly supplicating a throne of the heavenly grace, with strong cries, tears, and *faith*, in his behalf. The ladies, sick from the long ride through the scorching rays of a summer's sun, retired immediately upon their arrival on the ground. Mr. R. went into a tent, where he encountered Mr. Stewart, who, after the usual salutation, said, "Before separating for this evening, let us pray." The two knelt down, others gathered around, and when the invocation was ended, a good sister struck up a lively air, which had the effect of attracting a still larger "crowd of witnesses." This concluded, a brother was called upon to pray, who fairly besieged the throne in behalf of the unconverted upon the camp ground. Mr. Stewart repeated the story of a blessed Saviour's love in the ear of Mr. R., and that gentleman, resolving no longer to be "disobedient to the heavenly calling," fell upon his knees, and besought God for Christ's sake to remit his transgressions. Had Jehovah turned a deaf ear to Mr. R.'s entreaties, our Heavenly Father had been open to a charge which none have ever been able to bring against his infinite mercy and love. On the contrary, that very first evening, when the sinful man called upon God out of a sincere heart, fervently; and in the right exercise of faith, took close hold upon, and clung with a drowning tenacity to the many inspired promises, he received the pledge of love, and exclaimed with the prophet, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth ini-

quity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, *because he delighteth in mercy*." Thus was Mr. R., by yielding up *all*, in the outset, prepared to enjoy a feast of love, with the saints at God's banqueting house, during the camp-meeting, and fitted to return to his temporal avocations, an example of piety to those among whom he might be called to mingle. The influence of the meeting was felt over many parts of the circuit, long after its sheets were razed, and when the snow-clouds gathered over a wintry sky, its effects were visible in the various churches in which Mr. Stewart and Charles Downs (who came to assist him in January) held protracted meetings.

Mr. Stewart not only strove continually to induce sinners to turn from the error of their ways, but unceasingly pressed upon professors the *necessity* of Christian holiness. And he preached this doctrine in that way which manifested that he was habitually grounded and settled in the experience thereof himself.

"Holiness is but another name for PURE LOVE! It constitutes a bond of union, reaching all, encircling all, beautifying all. Those in the same rank of being are attracted to each other, and all are attracted to that which is higher in rank. Not only loving but *united* in love. *God in all and all in God;* the Father in Christ, and Christ in those who are begotten of him, mutually bound together and living in each other."

Hasten, Lord, the perfect day;
Let thy every servant say,
I have now obtained the power,
Born of God, to sin no more.

Mr. Stewart was returned to New Egypt in 1838, with a young and talented preacher, whose first year this was in the Conference. Alas for *talent without grace!* He was constantly, by his imprudence, subjected to the censures of circumspect Christians, and before the termination of his first twelve months, his name was one for which few had esteem or even respect. The heart of him under whose guidance he had been placed was continually torn by reports of his colleague's misdemeanor. He was rebuked with paternal tenderness and affection, exhorted to consider the high calling unto which God had honored him, and besought by this demonstration of God's peculiar love, "to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." He was borne with by the people, at Mr. Stewart's earnest request, till his appointed time at New Egypt expired; but the ensuing year was his last in the ministry.* The troubles incident to this year, together with the extraordinary labor to which Mr. Stewart aspired, induced an illness which confined him to his room for several weeks. Thus by

* This young man eventually fell away altogether, and returned to the pleasures and vices of the world, in which he still lives. May the God of all mercy and power yet restore and save him with an everlasting salvation!

overtaxing his physical powers did he experience an interruption of the enterprises of benevolence and piety upon which his heart was set, and for which he was specially qualified. It was intensely afflicting to his ardent and holy mind, to be diverted from his proper and loved business of preaching the gospel of Christ's glory, and pleading with men to be reconciled to God, to the reprehending of him who should have aided in bearing the burdens of the heavy charge, and reflected honor by an upright walk and chaste conversation upon the sacred cause of Christianity. His heart was strengthened, however, by revivals in several appointments, and by witnessing the conversion of many of the children of pious parents. Four sons of David Applegate, and three sons of Richard Robbins, both of whom were *standard* Methodists on the circuit, were among the number. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God."

The following letter to a beloved brother bears date of February 14th:—

DEAR BROTHER: I received your favor dated January 27th, and was glad to hear from you all. I do not profess to be a great letter writer, but I delight in a friendly correspondence. The letter which you refer to was not received; I began to think that *the wife* would now engross your undivided attention, but I rejoice to find it otherwise. I am sorry to hear you say a fear arose in your mind that the friendships of this circuit had sup-

planted all others. I do not forget my friends. It would be gratifying for me to visit and preach to you, but I cannot now. Several weeks since I commenced to raise blood, and the physician tells me I can never be well, though he thinks I may be patched up to last awhile yet. I am quite unwell at the present. I have brought this upon myself by speaking too much. Sometimes I preach eight times in the week, and attend several funerals. Our churches are all too small; there are frequently two or three hundred who cannot be accommodated within the walls, and they stand at the doors and windows listening eagerly. I have recently been solicited *to settle* among a kind people, but I cannot be bought with money, though I am not worth much. I tried to preach last Wednesday evening from "Whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent." (Acts xiii. 26.) Our altar was crowded from one end to the other; several were let into liberty! Some were men of high standing in the community, and they promise usefulness in the cause of religion. Oh, how I wish for a strong body and lungs! As the year draws to a close, I find myself attached to this place, but I am trying to wean myself. I have lately received the intelligence of the death of a half brother. He passed away in the triumphs of faith and enjoying the comforts of the gospel. I should not be writing this morning, but I steal the time because I love you. I think I am slowly recovering now, and *believe I shall get well. It is a great cross for me to*

desist from speaking. But if I allow myself to talk, my glorious theme will animate my mind, and then my voice is elevated too high. I am very happy! All things shall work together for good to them that love God. "Salvation" has never sounded more charming than since I have been afflicted, nor *never have my enjoyments been sweeter.* I have had time to retrospect my past life; how grateful I feel that I chose God for my portion. But I have to mourn over many missteps! My family have been and still are afflicted; three of my children have been sick, two are now convalescent. I may *possibly* visit you again soon. I do not know that I shall be able to preach, but I flatter myself that I have some friends among you who would welcome me if I was not. Oh! I hope to stand with them upon the golden pavements of the New Jerusalem, and ring the song of redemption over the hills and vales of eternity.

Yours, affectionately,

THOS. G. STEWART.

On no circuit had Mr. Stewart's ministry been more acceptable than at New Egypt; and, as has been shown, he continually labored with all his might to bring souls to Christ. The professors of religion were quickened all over the circuit. When he was absent from home, he visited, as far as possible, each member in the charge to which he had come, conversing and praying with the sick, and essaying to bind up the wounded hearts of suffering

or bereaved ones. In his diary of the 14th of August, he writes:—

"I was providentially thrown in company, to-day, with a young married lady, who has just buried her babe. With bitter grief, she unfolded her sorrows to me. I inquired if she had experienced a change of heart, and she sadly replied, 'No, sir.' I tried to point her to Him who once said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' &c., and assured her it was her blessed privilege to follow the precious child, if cleansed, and made pure as that child, by the efficacious blood of Jesus. I told her that I considered this providence of God not inscrutable, but a loud and palpable call for her to prepare to meet God. I left her in deep meditation."

In these ways, his labors were rendered eminently useful, because, in the exercise of sympathy, he won the affections of the people, and then they were prepared to receive, and be directed by, his instructions, according to their peculiar circumstances. Never was minister more deeply interested in the happiness of his people. In the latter years of his life, it was not an uncommon occurrence for Christians under trial, or severe temptation, to call upon him, reveal their peculiar troubles, and ask him to pray in faith for their immediate deliverance from distress. After conversation and advice, he was wont to kneel with them and call upon God, and the blessing craved was almost universally and *gloriously* vouchsafed. The following is one of the hymns which Mr. Stewart

admired, and would sometimes sing, on such occasions of rejoicing.

Oh! love divine, how sweet thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
  All taken up by thee?
I thirst, I faint, I die, to prove
The greatness of redeeming love—
  The love of Christ to me.

Stronger his love than death or hell;
Its riches are unsearchable;
  The first-born sons of light
Desire in vain its depths to see;
They cannot reach the mystery,
  The length, the breadth, the height.

God only knows the love of God;
Oh, that it now were shed abroad
  In this poor stony heart!
For love I sigh, for love I pine;
This only portion, Lord, be mine:
  Be mine this better part.

Oh, that I could forever sit
With Mary, at the Master's feet!
  Be this my happy choice;
My only care, delight, and bliss,
My joy, my heaven on earth, be this—
  To hear the Bridegroom's voice.

Oh, that I could, with favored John,
Recline my weary head upon
  The dear Redeemer's breast?
From care, and sin, and sorrow free,
Give me, O Lord, to find in thee
  My everlasting rest.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. STEWART ON CUMBERLAND CIRCUIT.

Appointment of 1839—Dr. Fisler—A pleasant colleague—Port Elizabeth—Change of text in the pulpit—Peculiarities of Mr. Stewart—His manner of preaching—Stanzas—His soul is encouraged by cheering prospects—Parsonage repaired—Undivided spiritual interest—Millville—Character of its Christians—A sermon—Happy effect—Camp-meeting—Sudden death—Extract—Revivals—School-houses—Black Water—Anecdote—Conference at Burlington, in 1840—Illness of his son Joseph—Returns to Port Elizabeth—Full churches the second year—Love feast at Millville—Mr. Stewart attends a camp-meeting at Daretown, on Salem Circuit—Result—Marriage of his eldest daughter.

At the Conference of 1839, which was held in Trenton, April 24th, Mr. Stewart was appointed to Cumberland Circuit. This was particularly gratifying to both the minister and his wife; to the latter, on account of its being contiguous to her relatives, with whom she had been privileged to mingle but little since her departure for Ohio; to the former, because he would be thrown upon familiar ground, and among the friends with whom he had consorted in early life, and for whose eternal welfare he experienced an especial solicitude. He returned from

Trenton on the 27th, preached a "farewell discourse" at New Egypt, to an overflowing house, on the 28th, and bade adieu to the circuit on Monday, the 29th. Their furniture was sent via Philadelphia, by water, from Bordentown, and Mr. Stewart, wife, three daughters, and a son, proceeded by carriage to Port Elizabeth, in which village was the parsonage designed for them to occupy, and owned by the Methodists of the circuit. Until the arrival of their goods, the entire family were most cordially entertained by Dr. Benjamin Fisler, a local preacher, now far advanced in years. His colleague was Rev. John F. Crouch. Never existed greater union of holy sentiment, harmony of pious spirit, oneness of purpose, between two preachers. Brother Crouch resided in Cedarville, which was at the extreme end of the circuit; yet was there constant and uninterrupted intercourse sustained between these men of God, during the entire two years of their connection. Thus closely united, possessed of that indomitable faith, energy, and perseverance which are at once the ingredients for, and the promoters of, signal religious success, they set forth, invoking the assistance of God in their labor of love. A singularly coinciding humility, amiability, and conscious weight of responsibility, was also visible in their characters. Moreover, they exhibited an exemplary degree of "kindly affection the one for the other," invariably "preferring one another in honor," and always rejoicing in St. Paul's affirmation, "He that planteth and he that watereth are one."

The appointments on this circuit were Port Elizabeth, Millville, Cumberland-Furnace, Cedarville, Malaga, Black-Water, Fork-Bridge, Grove, Mauricetown, Dividing Creek, and Swings. When Mr. Stewart drove over the mead skirting the town of his future residence, and glanced at the dimensions of the fine structure designated as the Methodist church, he was led to exclaim: "Surely much people of this heritage serve God day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne dwells among them." He was exceedingly grieved in spirit upon the occasion of his first preaching in Port Elizabeth, to behold in the large and beautiful church but a few worshippers, and that over a majority of these had fallen a cloud of spiritual dulness. After entering its sacred precincts, he was constrained to alter the language which had suggested itself to his mind, from, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord," to "My soul thirsteth for Thee in a dry land where no water is; to see thy power and glory so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary." Though deprived of the knowledge of many philosophical books, Mr. Stewart had been a diligent student of "the more sure word of prophecy" since the date of his conversion; and although he never entered the pulpit with a superficial preparation for its exercises, he sometimes, when the circumstances of the occasion called for it, consented to preach with summary notice, or changed the subject chosen for exposition, after entering the sanctuary, to a familiar

discourse, which was deemed more appropriate. Although he preached very frequently, every discourse was the result of labor, and he did not then dare to ascend the sacred steps until assured by faith in his secret requests of God, that the Comforter would vouchsafe his presence and aid. This constituted him an able workman who needed not to be ashamed. He had no model placed before him, but asked God to touch his lips with the finger of his power, and to enable him to "speak forth the words of truth and soberness," not as a man pleaser, but "in demonstration of the spirit and of power." His sentences were usually short, terse, and impulsive; calculated to instruct scripturally; and when he became warmed by the beauty, sweetness, and importance of his theme, his voice was always elevated to a high pitch, which he maintained without sudden fluctuation, to the conclusion of his sermon. Whatever he lost by early disadvantages, he certainly by subsequent intercourse with various classes of men, became well acquainted with the workings of the natural heart, the devices and subtility of Satan in reference to saint and sinner; so that, from his soul, burdened with the sacred message from God, was elicited abrupt, but powerful sentences which awakened a spirit of examination in the lukewarm professor and stirred up "a fear which hath torment" in him who rejected the mild, but peremptory rule of Christ altogether. He had a good imagination and a tolerable art of description, especially when dwelling upon the glory of heaven. In the language of

an unconverted individual who often heard him preach on this circuit, "No man could make heaven appear more sublime and desirable, none render hell more fearful and gloomy." But Mr. Stewart's forte lay in his *feeling*. This, in a preacher, is more important than either fancy or art of description. He who delights the mind by fine allegories, may tingle the ear, but he who possesses a warm glowing heart, will touch the feelings of his hearers, be he not half so eloquent in the ordinary acceptation of the word. By one, eloquence has been defined "the power of imparting one's feelings to others." In this sense he abounded in eloquence; for he had a divine fervor breathing into his thoughts and inspiring his speech. Sometimes, like Christmas Evans, the great Welsh evangelist, "he became quite overwhelmed with the magnitude and grandeur of his theme, and then he spoke with such impassioned earnestness as *to storm* the hearts of his congregation." He was become at the time of his first entering the pulpits of Cumberland Circuit, in the fullest sense of the term, "an experimental preacher."

"That a preacher *feel* his subject, constitutes one of his excellencies; but that his sermon be deeply imbued with the spiritual experience of the preacher, is the crowning point of his excellency. It is true, a person may speak well of the distress of other people; but he will speak more powerfully of his own distress. Persons may expatiate on the pleasant fragrance of flowers of foreign lands, but those who have themselves participated in the odors, in the soft

breezes of those countries, can describe them in an infinitely superior manner. Many may speak fluently of the mercies of God, in providence and grace, in protecting, preserving and pardoning sinners, but those who have *experienced* a sense of the divine mercy in their own souls can speak much better of it." *Mr. Stewart spoke what he felt, and because he felt.* Having *heard* Christ's voice, *felt* the power of his blood, *tasted* his love, and *seen* wonderful exhibitions of his pardoning mercy, he was ready to stand up and sing:—

What we have *felt* and *seen*,
With confidence we tell;
And publish to the sons of men,
The signs infallible.
We who in Christ believe
That he for us hath died;
We all his unknown peace receive,
And *feel* his blood applied.

Exults our rising soul,
Disburdened of her load,
And swells, unalterably full
Of glory and of God.
Stronger than death or hell,
The sacred power we prove;
And conquerors of the world, we dwell
In heaven, who dwell in love.

Mr. Stewart was encouraged to find an intelligent and interesting membership in Port Elizabeth, whose sympathies were early stirred, and whose zeal was soon kindled; the congregations were at once increased, and he, at the expiration of three months, was able to employ the words which his lips refused

to utter at first, and he heard, from many sincere hearts, the language of the Psalmist: "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."

The class-leaders, William Heisler, Job Channels, and Jacob Coombs, were sterling men: faithful, exemplary, "instant in season and out of season; exhorting with all long suffering and doctrine."

The parsonage house, although surrounded by an extensive garden and grounds, was inconvenient, and too small for a large family. From long neglect or inattention, it also clamored loudly for repairs and painting. Mr. Stewart, who had always betrayed a commendable interest in improving and beautifying the spots of his residence, especially when the property of the church, proposed to the brethren upon the circuit to erect an addition, and otherwise improve the structure. The proposition was sanctioned; six feet were added to the west end, the old building was renovated, the grounds planted with shrubbery and shade trees, and grape-vines trained to run over a tall arbor, and shelter the rear sections of the house from the sun.

While these improvements were progressing at the parsonage, Mr. Stewart did not less fully discharge his pastoral office among a numerous people, but rode from one appointment to another, preaching almost every night, and laboring with his accustomed zeal for that kingdom from which no interest was suffered, for an hour, to divert his attention.

Millville was the stronghold of the circuit. It showed the largest membership, and the Christians comprising it were hearty, whole-souled Methodists, who evidently tried and labored more for the cause of Christ than the selfish object of amassing wealth! Those who were blessed with the treasures of earth, conferred liberally for the support and diffusion of "the gospel of peace;" those who toiled in the glass manufactories of the town, gave as they had ability, and all rejoiced in worshipping God together, and in coming up boldly and gladly "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." They were a praying, praising, *shouting*, happy people! The heart of Mr. Stewart always felt warmed upon entering the pulpit of the old roughcast church edifice in Millville, and before leaving it, he and his congregation were generally blessed by an abundant and glorious outpouring of the spirit! They frequently enjoyed what was termed "a shout in the camp of Israel," and sang lustily the good old hymn :—

> Oh, happy day that fixed my choice
> On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
> Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
> And tell its raptures all abroad.

The class-leaders, Josiah Shaw, Noah Sheldon, Thomas Corson, William Pogue, and Stephen Garrison, were faithful stewards, examples of Christian charity, who realized in their experience that "the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Good old Stacy Wilson, William Powell, and others, whose hospitality Mr. Stewart

and family enjoyed, will never be forgotten by the recipients of their kindness. Some of these holy men and women have been called to endure much affliction since those joyous seasons; several have *gone on* and met the subject of this biography, "beyond the vale of tears." Those who still live, look to the Author of their faith to be its finisher, and, seeing that the Captain of their salvation was made perfect through suffering, they take courage, and with the exclamation, "The servant is not greater than his Master," they "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Mr. Stewart, during his first year on Cumberland Circuit, preached in Millville, from the text, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." (John xxi. 22.) In this sermon, he endeavored to explain the meaning of our Saviour's words, and exhorted his hearers to mind their own duty, and try to prepare for the trials which they should be called to encounter, and pry not, with vain curiosity, into the secret events which might befall others; to take Christ as their great Exemplar, and follow him through evil as well as good report; concluding with an idea of the glory which should be revealed in and to them, when permitted to follow Christ into the celestial mansion which he has gone to prepare. His mind seemed to catch fire at the thought of the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, but which were already revealed by the Spirit to them that love him; and he thanked God for *the privilege of following Christ*, even though the path was beset with diffi-

culties and trials, and the entrance to the Heavenly Kingdom was preceded by the dark valley and shadow of death.

The congregation (though the preacher did not suppose the first part of his discourse *particularly* appropriate to them) were delighted with the whole sermon, and, as the genuine followers of the meek and lowly Jesus always do, they resolved to profit by the good advice given, and, "striving together for the faith of the gospel, to stand fast in one spirit with conversation that should become the gospel of Christ." In the last part, the speaker himself *feeling;* the sympathy of the people was aroused, and borne along in his joyous imagination; sinners buried their faces in their hands, and shed penitential tears at the memory of the manifold sins which had been committed against Him who suffered to redeem them, while saints rejoiced that they were in the path of duty, and had Christ on their side. A camp-meeting in Steven Garrison's woods, six miles from Millville, which was held a few weeks after, brought a number into the fold of Christ who felt the converting influence of the Holy Spirit for the first time under Mr. Stewart's powerful preaching in this church.

The camp-meeting referred to was large, and proved beneficial in the conviction and conversion of sinners, and in establishing those already professing religion, more firmly in the faith. "Father Neal," the presiding elder on the district, was present, and under his mild, yet peremptory government, remarkably good order was maintained, and the work

of the Lord prospered. Mr. Stewart and his colleague were indefatigable in their labors to bring souls to Christ, and, as has been observed, were eminently successful.

A gentleman residing in Millville, who had pitched a tent on the ground, and brought his wife and family to enjoy the immunities of the meeting, returned to his home to perform some temporal business one evening, and having attended to the duty which called him away from the grove, he retired to bed. Not seen preparing to go to his family, as proposed, the following morning, the neighbors forced an entrance into his house, and found him lying cold and breathless in the bed, to which he had gone, apparently, in his usual health, less than twelve hours before. The melancholy intelligence was carried to his wife, who returned, sorrowing, to perform the last sad duties towards her husband with whom she had parted only yesterday—looking forward to years of sweet, connubial happiness. Happy for this man, his peace was made with God, and doubtless to him death was gain.

"Life has no value as an end, but means;
An end deplorable! a means, divine!
When 'tis our all, 'tis nothing; worse than naught;
A nest of pains; when held as nothing, much.

Life is most enjoyed
When courted least; most worth when disesteemed;
Then 'tis the seat of comfort, rich in peace;
In prospect richer far; important! awful!
Not to be mentioned but with shouts of praise!
Not to be thought on but with tides of joy!
The mighty basis of eternal bliss!

Revival seasons were enjoyed this year at Millville, Swings, Cedarville, Fork Bridge and Port Elizabeth. At the latter place about fifty in three weeks were the subjects of God's renewing grace. Among the number was the daughter of Dr. Fisler, who, up to this time, though a sweetly amiable and lovely young lady, had suffered the pride of the natural heart to deter her from that important step which now she resolved to take. Individuals, whose minds are stored with theoretical, religious knowledge, who know the way of the cross from having witnessed holy parents tread in it, and having its directness designated—are not usually long, seeking the pardoning love of God. Miss Fisler did not signify her spiritual desires by kneeling at the altar, in front of the pulpit, but prostrating herself before the mercy-seat, by the side of Maria Stewart, at the pew upon which she had been sitting, she asked and received in Jesus' name; scarcely half an hour elapsed before "the still small voice" of the blessed Saviour was distinctly heard, whispering, "Thy sins, which were many, are all forgiven thee; go in peace and sin no more." Upon this circuit were several school-house appointments. To the people who assembled in these, Mr. Stewart esteemed it an especial privilege to preach. In such humble buildings he was always favored with what he called "liberty"—freedom of speech, and the glorious presence of the Comforter. He declared that he did not object to fine churches with elaborate ornaments, provided they could be speedily paid for; but if left to choose for himself,

he would prefer a plain temple and a plain people! In a school-house, crowded full of sincere worshippers, he was at home. He chose a short text, preached a short sermon, gave a short exhortation, but gloried in a *long* prayer-meeting, which to him, and the Christians whom he labored with, was, to employ an expression of one of them, "short enough if kept up all night." At Black Water, he was gratified with an immense school-house, and a company of zealous brethren, who possessed unsuppressed shouting propensities. To this place he loved to go, and his coming was always hailed by the goodly Methodist community as a time when "a good season" would be enjoyed in the old school-house. Upon one occasion, when he arrived at this place of worship, he found benches, desks, and every foot of space crowded with people, patiently waiting his appearance. It was December. The huge old fashioned stove roared with the draught through its blazing pine-knots, and the loud winds whistled around the corners of the building. He stood behind the sacred (?) desk, preached to a thirsty people and held a prayer-meeting, in which all received "a powerful blessing" that incited them to shout aloud the praises of Immanuel's name. *They "broke up" at twelve o'clock!* Mr. Stewart and his wife, who had accompanied him, remained all night with a brother, who lived in a large, old brick house which had stood the storms and braved the winds of a century. Of recent years, fears had been entertained, during the prevalence of high winds, that the ancient structure would yield to their mighty power. To

counteract their influence, enormous poles had been placed as props against one of its sides. Mrs. Stewart was alarmed upon entering her lodging apartment to find that her head was to oppose these props; but her husband, listening to the winds which whistled and surged without, knelt before him "who holdeth the winds in his fists," and asking protection for the night, lay calmly down upon his bed, apprehending not but that they should rise refreshed and uninjured. Before the dawn of day, the winds had subsided, and the severity of the weather abated. With hearts full of gratitude for the care which God had exercised over them in danger, the faithful pair returned to their home.

Never did Mr. Stewart pass a pleasanter year with colleague and people, than this first one on Cumberland Circuit. To use his own language: "Not a jarring measure grated upon my ears during the entire twelvemonth."

Gracious revivals occurred at the appointments previously named, and all men, with all things, worked together most harmoniously. Messrs. Stewart and Crouch felt that they could adopt the language of Charles Wesley, and sing—

> Jesus, united by thy grace,
> And each to each endeared,
> With confidence we seek thy face,
> And know our prayers are heard.

They went up to Conference, which was held at Burlington, in the spring of 1840, bearing good re-

ports from their territory, and creditable collections from each individual charge.

Mr. Stewart's sons had settled in Burlington, after attaining their majority; the elder was now married to an estimable and pious lady, and they were keeping house. Mrs. Stewart accompanied her husband to Conference, in order to visit her sons. They set out in their own conveyance, and proposed spending a night to rest in Medford. Upon their arrival at that village, they were informed of the illness of Joseph, their youngest son; and, though it was now dark, and twelve miles intervened between him and them, no persuasion could influence them to tarry for a single hour. Hastening on, they found Joseph very low of pleurisy; but, at the expiration of four days, rejoiced to see him convalescent.

Bishop Hedding presided at this session of the Conference, and, at its close, returned Mr. Stewart, with his colleague, to the same circuit. This was, of course, pleasant to both. How must their souls have exulted to see Zion in prosperity again the second year; considering their ardent desire for the salvation of men! All over the circuit the churches were filled to overflowing; the members were built up in their most holy faith, and many, who the year previous had rejected the influences of the Holy Spirit, were persuaded to turn in with the free offers of mercy, and fight against the reign of Christ Jesus no more! A love feast, held at Millville this year, was a memorable occasion. Father Neal, loved and vene-

rated by all who knew him, opened the services, which were held before preaching, in the morning, by the use of that sweet old hymn—

> And are we yet alive,
> And see each other's face?

After an introductory prayer, Father Neal arose, and, in his pathetic style, related a fragment of his religious experience. Then came Mr. Stewart, with one of his favorite passages of Scripture: "For I reckon that the *sufferings* of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory* which shall be revealed in us." Bro. Crouch followed with his glowing adoption of the beloved disciple's language: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, *we shall be like him;* for we shall see him as he is." These were joined by Brothers Stacy Wilson, Isaac Newcome, Thos. Corson, William Pogue, Josiah Shaw, Joseph Linthecum, John Doughty, and many others, who were "epistles, known and read of all men," in the testimony for the reality of the religion of the blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A young man who had recently found God in the pardon of his sins, arose and said: "But a few months have elapsed since God, for Christ's sake, blotted out my transgressions. I have been one of the vilest of the vile. My convictions of sin were long resisted, but my efforts to put them aside only resulted in a

deeper sense of my lost condition, unless saved by the grace of Christ. Eventually, I knelt with a penitent heart at the altar of prayer in this church; but, after this step, I yielded to the suggestions of Satan, resolved to cease my mourning, and plunge into the vortex of worldly pleasure for solace. A brother pointed me to the cross as my only hope, and *I swore I would not pray!* My wretchedness became intolerable, and had never been less; but for repenting my sinful affirmation, and asking God to forgive that, and all my world of criminality, He did it, and his merciful hand has led me into flowery paths of peace, and by still waters of comfort, and my soul is restored to the bliss of salvation."

Christian men and women were gathered in the old church, that happy day, from all parts of the circuit, and blended their voices together in hymns of praise to Him who died that they might be washed in his own most precious blood; and many, in good, old-fashioned Methodist style, shouted aloud the triumphant sentences of ecstasy, which rushed unbidden to their lips. These came not to visit their friends, but to meet him who is the Friend of sinners, and tell to all the gracious dealings of God to their hearts. Strangers were entertained by the good wives and daughters of the brethren, than which, none of any appointment ever exhibited more genuine Christian hospitality. This quarterly meeting will ever be remembered by those who enjoyed it, as an occasion of much spiritual profit.

In the summer of this year, Mr. Stewart attended a camp-meeting at Daretown, on Salem Circuit, and preached from the text, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" God spake through his servant, and the word was accompanied by power. Men who had remained through many years of sin, unmoved by the sounds of warning from gospel trumps, were wonderfully wrought upon, and impelled to change immediately their dangerous habits. A young man, who, till this hour, had never given the eternal interests of his soul a serious consideration, was heard to remark: "That man ought to be paid for preaching this morning. I never knew of what *material* the soul was composed before." He sought religion a few months subsequent, and Mr. Stewart had the pleasure of receiving his name as a probationer, during the next year, on that circuit.

The people of Salem Circuit, observing Mr. Stewart's earnestness and zeal at the camp-meeting, resolved to ask for him at the next Conference; feeling confident that *such* effort must result in the general reviving of the membership, and salutary influences upon the unconverted. The episcopal power, always ready to favor the wishes of the laity as far as possible, granted the request, and at Newark, in April of 1841, Mr. Stewart was appointed for Salem Circuit. He bade adieu to the people who had become endeared to him on Cumberland Circuit, with his usual feelings of regret, and his customary language of con-

fident expectation of a reunion in the realms of eternal bliss, beyond the swellings of Jordan. His daughter Maria was married to a prominent member of the church at Port Elizabeth, during the last year of his residence there, and this rendered the removal from that town a source of unusual sorrow to him and his devoted family.

CHAPTER X.

MR. STEWART ON SALEM CIRCUIT.

Removes to Allowaystown—Appointments—Preparation for a campaign—Camp-meeting—A new church—Revival at Haine's Neck—Extraordinary time at Penn's Neck—An exhortation—Its effect—Mr. Stewart at Salem—Anecdote—Illness of his son—Abram Owen—Penn's Neck camp-meeting—Individual conversions—Another new church—Revival in Pittsgrove—Wonderful success in bringing souls to Christ—"A seeker's department" in the church—Manner of Mr. Stewart in the meetings—Judah's Lion—Death of his son—Letter.

ALTHOUGH Salem Circuit had been favored with two zealous laborers during 1839 and '40, Mr. Stewart found it in what he termed "a low state." His entrance upon this field was attended with considerable conflict of mind; he felt for several weeks after his removal to Allowaystown, that more constant prayer, watchfulness, and fasting, must be employed on his part; and he directly instituted them. His colleague, the first year, was George A. Raybold. The appointments were, Allowaystown, Pittsgrove, Penn's Neck, Hancock's Bridge, Nazareth and Haine's Neck. At each of these, upon his first visit, he requested the Christians to unite with him in earnest prayer that the Lord of Hosts might reveal himself

in great power, and that right speedily, to the result that their mutual labors might be crowned with abundant success. He was now well known in the Methodist connection as an active leader in revivals; and various reports and conflicting opinions were afloat respecting him, in consequence of which, great numbers flocked to hear the new preacher, and judge for themselves. He preached first at Allowaystown, and felt "although the membership were united, kindly, and spiritual, that they lacked that energy and vitality which he could have desired to find in his new quarters." But his faith was strong in Zion's God; he had learned by past experience that where were willing hands and affectionate hearts, the work of the Lord must prosper, providing the preachers discharge their duty faithfully. He passed the first three months in reconnoitring the battle ground and in preparing for the summer engagement at a camp-meeting, which he resolved should he held upon the circuit, by way of preface to the winter campaign. This was held in the woods of David Garton, five miles from Allowaystown, and resulted in the conversion of quite a large number, and a general revivifying of the membership in that part of the circuit. A church was built soon after, near the site of this meeting; and, not being in any village, but only in a neighborhood thickly settled by farmers, it was called "Nazareth." It was dedicated by Rev. Charles Ford, presiding elder of the district, and upon that day the names of fifty members were enrolled upon its records.

The first protracted meeting upon this circuit was at Haine's Neck; there symptoms of revival influence had been observed early in the fall. In three weeks an ingathering of fifty-five souls was effected. Mr. Stewart had labored hard at the camp-meeting, and almost incessantly since. Some of the appointments seemed immovably settled into a formality which the faith and prayers of the holy ministers upon the circuit did not, for a season, appear in the slightest degree to affect. The work at Haine's Neck, however, encouraged their fainting hearts, and they were constrained to adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your hearts, all ye that hope in the Lord." The contiguous appointment, Penn's Neck, was the subsequent resort. For a few days nothing but discouragements were encountered; the interest seemed rather to flag than increase. Mr. Stewart preached night after night, and exhorted with a fervor and earnestness which will never be forgotten by them who heard him. At length one soul was touched, yielded, and in the language of Mr. Stewart, "broke the ice!" another and another followed, till ten penitents presented themselves at the altar. The news went forth, "a revival at the old frame church, so long flat, fruitless, and sterile." The congregations gradually enlarged; men and women who had never seen the interior of the church were attracted by curiosity, fell beneath the power of conviction, and eventually owned Christ conqueror of their hearts. The country for several miles around was visited by Mr. Stewart;

the rich and the poor were invited to "come and see the Spirit of God revealed in mighty power." Many did so, and first condemning, then wondering, then *feeling*, they were at length persuaded to bow to the mild sceptre of the Lord. And scores by this means were introduced into the church, and eventually found Christ, to the joy and peace of their hearts! Before the meetings were suspended, preaching was no longer required; a short exhortation was given, and sometimes before this was concluded, souls would cry for mercy, and crowd the altar to the number of thirty. This was what Mr. Stewart delighted to see. If prevented from witnessing souls anxious for salvation, he was comparatively unhappy: "Glory to God, the author of salvation," exclaimed he, in an exhortation upon one of these occasions; "I *must* see the Holy Spirit at work among my people, or I cannot be happy. Happy! while hundreds of my fellow creatures whom I see every day, and love, and yearn for in the bowels of Jesus Christ, are dying in sin? Oh, give me such a sight as my eyes have gazed upon to-night, when scores of souls plead for pardon through my Saviour's efficacious blood; give me this, or let me go away from this sin-cursed, guilty, fallen world! Millions of men and women upon this rolling ball, who must repent or be banished from God and the glory of his power; and I sit with my hands folded and not lift my voice to cry, 'Prepare to meet thy God'? Could I be contented thus, I would not be so presumptuous as to ask God for mercy! My mission is to the dying people of earth, and

when my voice is heard no more in this capacity, let all who hear of it, say, Stewart is dead, for he could not live and *not* cry, 'Behold the Lamb!' Will more of this congregation come to Jesus? Do you see him hanging on yonder accursed tree? That eye is closed for you, young man! Do you observe him pierced by a soldier's spear? That precious blood gushes out for you, young lady! Do you see him looking commiseratingly upon that thief suspended next him? Thus he looks upon you, sinner; and you may be as near death as he. Do you hear that agonized cry that goes up single, echoless, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Answer it, unsaved one, by saying, 'He was forsaken for *me*.' Now he sits at the throne of his Father to avert the wrath of God. How just will be the anathema, 'Depart into everlasting habitations prepared for the Devil and his angels,' if all this is slighted! why will ye die, sinner? Christians enjoy life; Christains are happy in death! I thank my blessed Master, he waters my heart! I am in Christ, and trying to discharge my duty, consequently am perfectly happy! I know he owns me as his, and I rejoice! *All* who feel thus are able to rejoice! Sinner, would *you* rejoice? though your natural disposition is such as has deprived you of loving friends, Christ's spirit can make you gentle as a lamb; if all your life long, your heart has been deprived of permanent peace, Jesus' spirit will make you pleasant as a May-day. If now, from any disappointment, temporal embarrassment or pungent conviction of sin, a hell reign within you, the blood

of the Saviour can wash you clean and confer a heaven to go to heaven in, this very night. Will you have it, poor victim of Satan's wiles? Come to Jesus; come to the friend of sinners; come to the Guide of the erring; come to the power of God; come to a life of perennial bliss; come to a death of triumph; come to a part in the first resurrection; come to a home with angels; come to a seat with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; come to an eternity of glory in the presence of Him who made the earth and you, and has redeemed you in Christ's precious atoning blood. Come to all this, or go to your homes the same wretched sinners you were when you left them; go to a dismal life of transgression; to a rebel's grave; to an awful eternity; to an angry God; to a just Judge; to an endless perdition; to a companionship with devils; to unending remorse with the withering, crushing, condemning sentence, 'You knew your Master's will, and you did it not,' forever ringing dismally in your weary ears!"

The effect which such an impulsive plea as this had upon Mr. Stewart's audience can never be graphically described. Mounted upon a chair or bench of some kind, his gray hair falling around his wrinkled forehead, big tears rolling over his furrowed cheek, his eyes beaming love and paternal solicitude, the tones of his voice full of feeling and spiritual desire, his appeals were almost irresistible —to scores and hundreds altogether irresistible. Thousands have blessed the glad hour when he was appointed to the circuit upon which they lived;

because, during his sojourn among them, he, by such earnestness, induced them to "flee the wrath to come," and seek, in the pardoning smiles of the blessed Saviour, that rest which remains for the people of God. Farmers, their wives and children, came into the church militant at Penn's Neck, and thenceforward walked, an unbroken family, in the straight and narrow way that leads to the church triumphant. Among these were Tobias Casperson, Thomas Bradway, and Charles New. From this place, Mr. Stewart went to Salem, to assist Rev. G. F. Brown, in a protracted meeting in that town. While laboring there a young man heard him preach, who called upon one of the members of the church, the following day, and declared that he was not worthy the name of a clergyman, as his sermons were only "a composition of poetry, clamor, and exhortation, miscellaneously confused." "Where do you usually attend church?" inquired Brother Fennimore. "At a place where no such preaching as that is heard." "How long have you been a member of the church which you refer to?" "Oh, I am not a member of *any*, but *I have been attending our church fifteen years.*" "Well, then," said Brother Fennimore, "it is high time you had heard something more stirring than you have yet been *annoyed* with; and, doubtless, if you visit the Methodist church, and hear Brother Stewart a few more times, the conviction which I perceive has now taken hold of you will result in your conversion to God, and will change your language concerning one who has done more for you in

one sermon than all the "systematic preaching" you speak of, and to which you have listened for many years."

In November, of this year, Mr. Stewart's son Joseph came home sick. He had never perfectly recovered from his attack of pleurisy, the year previous, and contracting a second cold, he was rendered unequal to business, and came to his parents, in Allowaystown, hoping speedily to repair his physical losses. The anxious attention of the family was at once enlisted, and recourse was had to a physician, who frankly informed them that Joseph was in the incipient stage of consumption. His cough increased in severity during the winter, but as he retained a good degree of strength, their hopes were strong that his health would be permanently restored with the return of warm weather.

The Conference of 1842 returned Mr. Stewart to Salem Circuit, with Abram Owen as colleague. The prospects were bright for revivals at the commencement of the year, and the ministers went to work in strong faith and good earnest, for the advancement of the cause in which they were enlisted. A preparatory camp-meeting was held in Penn's Neck, in August, which was favored of God by a glorious visitation of converting power. The subjects of renewing grace were mostly young men and women, who were children of pious parents. There were a number, however, who were not of this class. A young lady, who had accompanied her parents, neither of whom were professing Christians, was deeply

convicted of sin under the preaching of the gospel, and repairing to a prayer-meeting in one of the tents, she seated herself upon a chair, and, burying her face in her hands, wept tears of sorrow and repentance. While in this place she was observed by her father, who, entering the tent, requested her instantly to leave it with him. She complied, and they both stood looking in at the entrance for a few minutes. While standing thus, a brother was called upon to pray, who, kneeling near Mr. L——, the unconverted man referred to, looked directly into his face, and supplicated God's mercy upon sinners, with all the ardor and fervor of his earnest spirit. Mr. L—— and his family returned to their homes, but were at the camp-ground the following day, and every day, including the last morning. The sermons to which this gentleman had listened attentively during the week, were of the most pointed and heart-searching character. He had seen and watched closely the workings of the Holy Spirit in others, and felt it striving with his own heart. But *he* was a great politician, and a prominent man among his party, and could not think of embracing religion, or humbling himself to become a meek and lowly follower of that Saviour and Exemplar who condescended to be born in a manger. Mr. Stewart arose, the last morning of the meeting, and delivered a valedictory exhortation—an exhortation full of pathos and holy solicitude. So earnest did he become, that he sprang upon the front of the stand, and, kneeling upon the Bible board, he besought sinners at this late hour, with

tears streaming from his eyes, to be reconciled to God, or signify their desire to be so. Several arose to their feet, in response to this request. Among them was the politician, Mr. L——. Mr. Stewart then insisted upon an instantaneous surrender of every ransomed power of these candidates to the Saviour, who bought their salvation; which must be evidenced by their bowing humbly at the altar before him. They came, and Mr. L—— with them. The important step was taken, and his family saw it. Upon returning to his residence, he ordered a barrel of whiskey which was in the cellar brought up, and emptied into the street; then marshaling his workmen, he informed them that each should receive an advance of wages, but *a prohibition of liquor!* He continued to seek God during the following week, and eventually found peace in the realization of pardoned sin. His wife and children followed his salutary example, and all connected themselves with the church at Penn's Neck. Another gentleman, Mr. William D——, who had been an intimate companion of the former in the political arena, was among the convicted and converted at this camp-meeting. He was thoroughly changed; testified to feeling the life and power of godliness diffused through his heart, cleansing it from sinful desires, and renewing it in the spirit of Christ. So grateful to Mr. Stewart did he feel for the personal interest manifested, that he sought him before departing from the ground, and said: "God bless you for your solicitude in my behalf. Through your instrumentality, I have been

brought from nature's darkness to God's marvellous light; I consider myself your insolvent debtor, and while *I* have a dollar, *you* shall not want. I have labored hard in my life, and amassed a considerable capital in this world's commodities. If ever necessary, you shall share it with me. To God be all the glory for the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost."

Mr. D—— also gave his hand in fellowship with the church, and when, the ensuing year, the congregations became too large for the old church edifice at Penn's Neck, both these brethren, with commendable liberality, made a generous offering to God, declaring their willingness "to cover the amount," if requisite, for the liquidation of the debt proposed to be contracted by the erection of a large and beautiful place of worship. Before Mr. Stewart's departure from the circuit, his eyes were gratified by witnessing the laying of the corner stone of this new structure, and subsequently his heart was exhilarated by being permitted to stand in its pulpit, and declare "the counsel of God" to a large and attentive audience, from which he received the sincere congratulations of numerous friends, who, ever after, with reverent affection, saluted him as "Father Stewart."

We are now approaching one of the greatest revivals which he was ever instrumental in bringing about. It was in an old brick church, called "Friendship," in the township of Pittsgrove, a district thickly settled by thriving and wealthy farmers, many of whom had lived through their young and vigorous years without attending upon any religious denomi-

nation whatever, and with scarcely a thought of the everlasting interest of their souls. No revival had occurred in the vicinity during *fourteen years*, and the congregation had dwindled to a handful, who were chiefly of the membership. These were instant in season, ever ready to perform acts of benevolence, and unusually considerate of the necessities of the preachers. "Despite the flat condition of things in this appointment," says Mr. Stewart, "we set a day to begin our protracted meeting." He and his energetic colleague endeavored to exercise strong faith, and "hope against hope," for Friendship. They plodded through the neighborhood, personally appealed to the unconverted, requested them to attend the services, and, by dint of perseverance, succeeded in tolerably well filling the lower floor of the church. Mr. Stewart often declared that he could exercise more faith for men who had not rejected repeated offers of salvation than for those who had been blessed with religious culture, only to despise its influence. He preached from—"Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee." He dwelt upon the thousand foolish excuses of sinners to justify themselves in a continuance of rebellion against the holy will of God, and exhorted them, with that singular vehemence which characterized his manner, to listen to the voice of God, calling through his servants. Then he pleaded with them to come to Jesus, in view of the countless mercies of God, and then, in his mellow voice, sang a favorite hymn, which he had learned

away in the forests of Ohio. Many will recollect to have heard this, and the sweet tune employed, and that always before its conclusion the people were awed into profound silence, unbroken except by the low sob of melting hearts.

Thus saith the God of glory:
I will have the world to know me,
Since they must stand before me,
To account for all that's done.
I am the God of Heaven,
Eternally am living;
All things are my creating,
For I am God alone.

Oh, sinners, will you hear me?
Since you cannot deceive me,
Then come and do believe me,
All things to me are known.
Yourselves you are deceiving—
My word by disbelieving;
Destruction you're receiving
From me that is God alone.

Oh, will you be reformed,
And to my word conformed?
My ransom is provided,
If you will only come;
But if you do refuse it,
I never will excuse it,
Because you do abuse it,
For I am God alone.

How can you stand my judgments,
When you shall in a moment
Hear the sounding of the trumpet,
A-bidding you to come?

Ah! I will fix your station
In hopeless desperation,
For slighting my salvation,
For I am God alone.

Draw near to me, my Zion,
For I am Judah's lion;
I ofttimes hear you crying,
And listen to your moan.
I never will forsake you,
But ever will protect you;
No evil shall o'ertake you,
For I am God alone.

And should you lack for pleasure,
Or if you lack for treasure,
Serve me and serve no other;
All things to me belong.
I am the God of pleasure,
I am the God of treasure,
And there is none that's higher;
I, I am God alone.

"Will you come, dear sinner? You will; let us see! Yes, they are coming to Jesus—*our* Jesus—the blessed Saviour, whose delight it will be to pardon! Now here are *a score of the young;* where are the middle aged and the white heads? *My* head is white; I shall soon lay it in the dust; will you receive good from the heart of your brother in years? I am too old to trifle now; I do not offer pardon in Jesus' name because it is a pleasing novelty. No! it is an old theme with me, but the older the more loved, because a shorter time is allotted to preach Christ. I am drawing near to the grave; this

tongue will soon cease its calling, these eyes will soon be done weeping over sinners; but

> Happy, if, with my latest breath,
> I may but gasp his name;
> Preach him to all, and cry, in death—
> Behold! behold the Lamb!"

From that first night, the work began; in a week from the date, to employ the language of a brother who was familiar with the state of feeling there—"the surrounding district was in a religious convulsion." The church was crowded to its utmost capacity, and its yard was filled with horses and carriages, some of which came twelve miles. A similar course was pursued here with that which had been adopted at Penn's Neck; the seats, which were movable, were at either side of the pulpit, formed into "a department," so that the seekers of religion might enter at one of the angles, kneel on four sides, with their faces outward, and the brethren employed in describing the way of life to "the mourner," passed around outside, and knelt, in their loving labor, to whisper words of cheer to those in the penitent's place. The singing was of the most lively and inspiring description; the prayers short, earnest, and *offered in faith;* consequently, all who presented themselves at the altar were speedily "let into the light and liberty of God's dear children." Two weeks from the day of commencing, an opportunity was given for those wishing it, to unite with the church, and eighty-four presented their names as probationers. Mr. Stewart, upon the same day, baptized fifty-one adults. This

asserted the fact that a majority of those converted, had not been nourished under religious influence. Many of this number were men and women in the middle stage of life, heads of families, and some far advanced in years, whose heads, like that of their preacher, were "blossoming for the tomb." This extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit continued four weeks, and one hundred and twenty were hopefully brought into the fold of Christ, and the pale of the church. A number of the older part of these have gone shouting home to glory, since that happy day that fixed their choice, while others are still pursuing the narrow way, confidently expecting soon to hear the welcome plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servants—enter into the joy of your Lord." From this place Mr. Stewart returned home to behold his son Joseph for the last time. All hope, and medical skill, and careful nursing, had availed nothing; the invalid gradually grew weaker, until, in sixteen months from the date of his return to his parents, at four o'clock on the morning of the 2d of January, 1843, he gently passed away to the better land. This was a severe affliction to the family, but "they sorrowed not as those who were without hope." Joseph had given his heart to the Saviour when only eleven years of age, and, without vacillation, continued during fourteen years to be a Christian, whose character was worthy of emulation. A few weeks before his death, he expressed a wish to partake once more of the symbols of Christ's dying body and blood, and Rev. Charles T. Ford, accompanied by Rev. George

F. Brown, went to his room, and administered it to his great comfort and satisfaction. He was conscious that he must soon go away from earth, but the prospect of mingling with the company of Heaven banished every desire to stay upon earth. He rejoiced greatly, as his end approached, at the thought of dwelling eternally with the blessed Redeemer. Several times he exclaimed, "If I were a preacher, how I would warn the youth not to put off the work of salvation till laid upon a sick bed. It is a poor place to prepare for eternity." A few days prior to his death, he was deprived of the use of his reason upon all subjects, except religion, upon which he was perfectly rational, up to the hour of his dissolution. On the 4th instant, his remains were followed to the cemetery in Allowaystown, by a mournful procession, and the solemn occasion improved by the delivery of a discourse by Rev. A. Owen, from the text "What man is there that liveth, and will not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" Psa. lxxxix. 48. Concerning this heavy bereavement, Mr. Stewart wrote to a brother in Philadelphia, under date of January 6th, 1843.

DEAR BROTHER: I sit down to inform you that our dear Joseph is no longer an inhabitant of earth. The last part of his life he spent at home. He was happy in his mind. Though his ideas were, by paralysis, somewhat confused, yet always, when spoken to about religion, he would clap his hands, and say, "Glory." He was a patient sufferer, and loved all

who came to see him. Before he died, he embraced, kissed, and bade us farewell. After being blest with his society so long, it was a hard trial for us to take him to the churchyard, and bury him in the ground. But oh! how improved are his circumstances now! Here he groaned and suffered; there he shall flourish in immortal youth! Oh! may we be prepared to meet him where parting will be no more. We are drinking the bitter waters of affliction, but we are reconciled to the will of our Heavenly Father, who we know is too wise to err, and too merciful to be unkind. A few years more, and *we* shall mingle with that innumerable company which no man can number, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Remember us kindly to your wife, and all who think us worthy of their kind notice.

Yours, very affectionately,

THOS. G. STEWART.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. STEWART ON SWEDESBORO' CIRCUIT.

Growing old—Constant exposure prejudicial to his health—General affection for him—Care in sickness—No inclination to take a station—An increasing love for his work—Mrs. Stewart's ideas of his assuming a supernumerary character—Removes to Swedesboro'—His colleague—Origin of the church in Swedesboro'—Large camp-meeting—Death of David Woolf—Denominational unity—Happy effect—The man who objected to noise—A letter—Death of Martha—Mr. Stewart's longing for the conversion of sinners—Revivals at Sculltown, Paulsboro', &c.—His love for all of pure faith—Father Walker.

THE subject of this memoir was now past fifty years of age. His general health was good, but the long rides which he was constantly taking to and from his numerous appointments, through intensely cold or oppressively warm weather, and the drenching rains, searching winds and driving snows to which he was often roughly exposed, began to affect him more seriously than in previous years. He would never disappoint a congregation, unless positively prevented from meeting it by weakness or pain of body. Not unfrequently, after a journey of fifteen or twenty miles, he found himself unable to walk to the church after alighting from his conveyance, much

less to stand an hour and preach or talk to a congregation.

He was deeply loved by the people upon all the circuits which he traveled, and invariably received the most unremitting and tender care from the Christian friends under whose roofs he chanced to be sick. From the time he left Salem Circuit, and by many, for years previous, he was called "Father Stewart," and to those who addressed him by this endearing title, he responded by using the gentle and affectionate terms, "my dear daughter" and "my kind son."

But although growing old *in* the service of God, he often declared he was not fatigued *of* his laborious and changing life. He betrayed more eagerness in his responsible avocation, as he realized his time upon earth shortening. He sometimes expressed an emotion of reluctance that he must so soon, in the course of nature, cease his work, and he always desired that he might "die in the harness." He had several times been advised to take a station, where it was supposed that his life would be less laborious; but this he invariably declined, affirming that a circuit was best suited to his manner and mind. There, if not blest with beholding sinners inquiring the way to Zion in one place, he had other places to which he might resort, and perhaps meet with better success. As for the recommended *ease*, he thought it "vastly better to wear out than rust out." He was sometimes inclined to take a supernumerary relation for one year, that he might renew his physical vigor, but his wife, who well knew his inability to refuse preaching when

invited, opposed the proposition, declaring "he would kill himself with hard and incessant labor before the year expired."*

His piety was of too exalted a character at this time to admit of any just description. They who enjoyed a familiar acquaintance with him were loud in expressions of admiration of his attainments in divine life. Every hour he enjoyed close and uninterrupted communion with the Lord Jesus Christ; and every day was one of repeated self-dedication, and of prayer and praise. He frequently became so absorbed in the contemplation of the just, merciful, and loving character of God, that he seemed unconscious of the ordinary transactions of life around him. In all the varying scenes of his life, he thought, spoke, and acted, as one whose implicit confidence was in God, and whose treasure was laid up in Heaven, and thitherward he was continually tending with all the powers of his spirit.

As he advanced toward the termination of his earthly pilgrimage, his graces became more illustrious, his faith waxed stronger, his humility was more profound, and his resignation to the entire will of God was made perfect.

The Conference of 1843, held at New Brunswick, sent him to the Swedesborough Circuit with Samuel Y. Monroe as colleague. This was Brother Monroe's

* It is a remarkable fact, that four years after, he withdrew his name from the active list at Conference, and died in nine months, having preached as many sermons as during any equal period of time from the date of his entering the ministry.

first year in the ministry. Mr. Stewart was much gratified with his genuine spirit of evangelization, and often expressed his admiration of the zeal of one, as yet, possessing so little experience in the itinerancy. They passed two harmonious and profitable years together, the intercourse of which bound their hearts firmly with unaffected love. And their love for the whole human family was, "without dissimulation, not in word, but in deed and in truth." Both were untiring in effort for the salvation of the world; experiencing no desire aside from that of being instrumental in bringing its lost sons and daughters to the foot of the cross.

The appointments upon this circuit were Swedesborough, Sculltown, Perkintown, Pennsgrove, Pedricktown, Repaupa, Paulsborough, Clarksborough, Bridgeport, Union, and "The Stone Meeting House." The first of these had been founded but a few years before, by Messrs. Samuel Black and David Woolf, two brethren who seceded from the Protestant Episcopal Church in that place, and donating the ground to a small society, worshipping in an old stone church, two miles distant, assisted in the erection of a large and commodious place of worship, in the very centre of the town. The society flourished under the preaching of the word; the membership rapidly increased, and the church debt was soon swept away. This effected, a tract of several acres and a parsonage were purchased in the suburbs, where the minister resided, for whose benefit were intended the products of "the farm."

To this location Mr. Stewart removed, and it was

his happy privilege to enjoy its abundance during two years. His existence was here checkered by joy in witnessing many sinners brought to Christ, and by sorrow elicited in the loss of his youngest daughter.

A camp-meeting was held in the woods of Mr. Samuel Black, in August of the first year. It was near the Delaware River, and this, affording an easy facility for access from all parts of the country, brought *thousands* to the spot. There were three hundred tents, and it was estimated that fifteen thousand people were present upon the last day. Powerful discourses were delivered by Revs. Charles T. Ford, John Lenheart, John K. Shaw, George A. Raybold, and Abram K. Street, of the New Jersey Conference, and several brethren from the Philadelphia Conference, which were blessed to the awakening of sinners. Perhaps the circuit was less profited than if the meeting had been smaller; but hundreds of new-born souls went rejoicing to distant homes who had resorted to the place more for the enjoyment of a rural excursion than with a sincere desire for spiritual improvement or reformation.

The last Sabbath, after the meeting had been formally dismissed on Saturday, and when a majority of the tents had been taken down, the people of the circuit, however, enjoyed beneficial occasions. The minds of penitents were less distracted by the moving about of masses of people, and the confusion which was unavoidable among the crowds who had thronged the ground previously.

A few weeks subsequent to the camp-meeting, the church at Swedesborough suffered an irreparable loss in the death of David Woolf, who has been referred to as one of the fathers of Methodism in that place. His funeral sermon was preached by Rev. Sedgewick Rusling, in the church which stands a monument to his, and the liberality of his friend Samuel Black.*

The Episcopalian and the Methodist were the only denominations in this town, and between their members there existed the most admirable Christian harmony. In several families, part were of one church and part of the other; yet between them was always maintained that beautiful spirit of unity which is always characteristic of the genuine follower of Christ. Between the clergymen of the two sects there sprang up an intimacy which had a salutary effect upon the minds of the community. In the time of a protracted effort in the Methodist church, the Episcopalians brought their children that they might profit by the preaching and animated exercises of the prayer-meeting; some of them were happily converted, and connected themselves with whichever branch of Christ's church their inclination led them to, and when this was *from* the communion of their parents, no dissatisfaction was apparent; but all rejoiced together as Christains who were only probationers for a few years

* Since the writing of this, Mr. Black has also joined the redeemed in heaven.

upon the shores of time, but who might in death enter upon an eternity of bliss, if possessed of a pure heart and a right spirit. This meeting resulted in the addition of thirty-five souls to the church in Swedesborough.

A Mr. David G——, who attended it from the commencement, was deeply convicted of sin, and his seriousness being observed, Mr. Stewart labored assiduously to effect from it "the issues of salvation." But the naturally obstinate heart of this sinner against God, refused to pursue the advice of a Christain friend: the "excitement and confusion" connected with the altar were offensive to his "prudent and orderly" ideas of religion. One evening, after an exhortation, which stirred the feelings of Mr. G—— with still greater terror on account of his exposed condition, he was persuaded to kneel in the pew where he had been sitting, and thus signify his desire of salvation, and his intention of seeking the Lord Jesus in the pardon of sin. He became exceedingly earnest in prayer; cried lustly to the God of pardon to remit his transgressions, and was converted from the error of his ways and opinions, *shouting* in a tone more nearly approaching "noise" than any that was heard at the altar.

In a similar manner with that witnessed at Swedesborough, the Lord made bare his arm and gave his pleasure to prosper in his servants' hands at Union, Clarksborough, and Pennsgrove, with the addition of a few names at all the other appointments.

While thus successfully and joyfully laboring in

the vineyard of his Master, Mr. Stewart was again called to experience great mental affliction in the apprehended death of Martha. She was in her seventeenth year; a girl admired and loved by all her acquaintances and friends on account of the natural sweetness of her disposition and the gentleness of her heart. She was completing her education at an institution in Swedesborough, to and from which she walked every day. She was deeply interested in her studies, and permitted no degree of inclement weather to deter her from recitation. Her perseverance in this way resulted in the contraction of a cold which assumed a pulmonary form, and no arm could rescue her from the relentless grasp of death. The following letter to a friend in Philadelphia, dated eleven days before her death, exhibits Mr. Stewart's feelings at that time.

SWEDESBOROUGH, *August* 11, 1844.

DEAR BROTHER: I sit down to inform you that I am yet among the living, and laboring as usual in the Lord's vineyard. My voice is not so strong as formerly, but I still try to advance the cause of our holy religion, and trust I have been, in some degree, successful. I feel like standing in my lot till the end of my days. I have an extensive and weighty charge—about twelve hundred members to look after, and, besides, I have the unconverted to seek, and be instrumental in saving. I begin to look toward a resting-place; from long and arduous labors, and the weight of years, my strength is failing. My own money is

now nearly all expended; where I shall find a home when I am no longer able to take charge of regular work, I do not know. I think Providence will provide some place. The Lord has hitherto provided, and that God in whom I have put my trust for many years, I believe will not leave me in age. Had I my life to live again, I would endeavor to be more holy. I often indulge in retrospection; I have some things to sorrow for, but I rejoice at the recollection of religious prosperity. In the revivals, on the circuits where I have labored, *four thousand souls have been received into the Methodist connection.* I can never sufficiently thank God for his mercy in redemption. My eldest daughter, who resides in Port Elizabeth, has been in poor health during the last year, but, by the goodness of God, is convalescent. My wife has been sick, and is not yet fully recovered. *Her* vigorous constitution has also begun to yield. Sarah and William are well. But the health of poor Martha has been declining for the last four months. She has pulmonary consumption, is confined to her bed, and all hope of her recovery has fled. This is very afflicting. Pray for us. I shall also soon pass to

> "That undiscovered country, from whose bourne
> No traveler returns."

I hope to unite with that company that knows no sorrow! Oh, what a glad prospect has the Christian! When a few more griefs I've tasted, I shall sing in a land where grief embitters not the experience.

Our suffering Martha often referred to the pleasure

she enjoyed at your house in the city. Joseph has gone, and she is fast going. The Lord's will be done. She has a good hope of a blissful immortality. Please present my respects to your family.

I remain, as ever,

Yours, very affectionately,

THOS. G. STEWART.

Martha failed much more speedily than her brother. A week previous, an immediate change was not looked for. A circumstance connected with her death, shows Mr. Stewart's eagerness for the salvation of men, in a strong light. He was invited to attend a camp-meeting on Salem Circuit; and, complying with the request of the brethren, he went to the ground, and while preaching, the intelligence of her death was communicated to him. Big tears of grief coursed down his furrowed cheek, as he advanced to the front of the stand, and said: "I knew, when I came to this place, that my youngest daughter must soon die; but I did not suppose her end was so near. I loved her with all the fondness of a father's heart, and I loved my Joseph, who died two years agone! Dear sinner, dear sinner, *I can bury my Joseph, and I can bury my Martha, but I cannot see you die without any hope of eternal happiness!*" Martha, agreeably to her own request, was laid beside her brother in the cemetery at Allowaystown, and Rev. S. Y. Monroe preached an appropriate and touching funeral discourse, from "The righteous hath hope in death." During the last year of her life, she constantly desired

and strove to progress religiously. Her unceasing cry was: "Oh! for a closer walk with God," &c. She endured her affliction with unexampled patience, and never expressed a wish to remain in the world longer than her Heavenly Father chose to permit her to suffer. She was not altogether free from the assaults of Satan, but triumphed at last by faith, and rejoiced in unclouded prospect of meeting those who had passed on before.

Martha, with folded arms across her breast,
Now low the valley sod beneath is laid,
And she, the loved of all, lies calm at rest,
Where blooming woodbine flowers perfume and shade.
Around her tomb the blossoms hang in showers,
True emblem of her short life here, and ours!

In the fall and winter of 1844, gracious revivals of religion were enjoyed at Paulsboro', Sculltown, and at a church called the Neck Chapel, five miles from Swedesborough. In the three appointments one hundred and seventy-five were received on probation. At the latter place, among the penitents who presented themselves at the altar, was one in whose firmness so little confidence was placed, that a leading member of the charge suggested the propriety of advising her to desist from seeking. She was distinguished for a foolish vacillation in all things in which she engaged, and her presence at the altar, it was feared, would only prove a stumbling-block, or an occasion of offence, to others. Mr. Stewart pleaded for the lady, who really seemed in earnest for her soul's salvation. She professed conversion, and joined the church.

All things are possible, if Christ strengtheneth; she rejoiced in a consciousness of God's love for *several weeks*, and then suddenly falling ill, was called to dwell with angels in Paradise, leaving no shadow of doubt upon the minds of the membership, but that she had *gone well.* Sculltown was proverbially "a wicked little town." Mr. Stewart was never better satisfied than when opposing the enemy successfully in such fields. The religious exercises were attended here with extraordinary power, and produced signal results. It was emphatically pronounced "*a high time in Golgotha.*" The people came in from the surrounding country, hungering for the word of life. Men and women bowed before the power of the word, as trees before a rushing, mighty wind, and "the slain of the Lord were many." The excitement was intense. Both preachers labored as though this were their final hearing before sinners, and transgressors fled to lay hold on the hope set before them. Strong men cried aloud in the congregation. Others, destroying their violins and games of chance, with which they had been accustomed to serve Satan, and which were indissolubly associated with his majesty's diabolical service, knelt meekly around the altar of prayer, and, in sacrificing "a right arm," or "an eye," realized the truth of the sentiment, "If from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." There was some opposition to the work, and some of the fiercer sort came to the church to mock or scoff at holy things; but, in nearly

every instance of this kind, conviction fastened upon the scorner, and the power of God brought him to sue for pardon at the feet of Bleeding Mercy. A number of the stanch supporters of Methodism in Sculltown are those who were once its most violent denouncers. Several, who lived for years to honor the Lord who saved them at that time, have died in hope of a better resurrection.

The revival at Paulsboro' commenced of itself—without extraordinary labor, and continued through several weeks, without opposition or interruption. This was a Methodist community. Men of wealth and influence were in the church, and their children, who had been trained in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord," followed in the footsteps of holy parents.

But little excitement prevailed at any time during the progress of the protracted meeting. While, however, it was seldom possible to elicit an expression of religious emotion, under almost every sermon, both the converted and the unconverted parts of the congregation were moved to tears. Sinners seemed to come to Christ from a sense of duty, or obligation, without repeated efforts to thwart the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, or to postpone the all-important work till "a more convenient season."

On the whole of Swedesboro' Circuit, Mr. Stewart pronounced the professing Christians "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The rapid and steady advancement of the cause of religion among

them, he attributed, in a great measure, to the fact that "the people had a mind to work;" and in reviewing his field at the close of his labors, deep and enduring pleasure was afforded him. He was deeply and conscientiously attached to the Methodists, to their theology and intinerant arrangements; at the same time, he held every section of Christ's church in equal depth of affection, provided they were pure in respect to faith and piety. The discipline of our church he thought preserved a more definite distinction between the professor and the worldling, and its peculiar institutions were a stronger hold upon the young converts, because in them was a means of fanning the flame of kindling piety. With a sincere and Christian respect for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, he had resolved, long ago, in regard to his Methodist brethren, "This people shall be my people, and their God my God;" nevertheless, he had many tenderly regarded friends in other denominations. And one of these was Mr. Brown, the rector of the Episcopal Church in Swedesboro'. He enjoyed pleasant, social, Christian intercourse with him for eighteen months; mourned his sudden death—which occurred in the autumn of 1844—and, after seeing his bodily remains deposited in the grave, listened to his funeral sermon from the chancel of the bereaved church. At Clarksboro', upon Swedesboro' Circuit, with his daughter Mary Ann, lived the venerable father in Methodism, Rev. John Walker. Though arrived at "threescore and ten," he still continued occasionally to lift his feeble voice in honor

of that cause which had occupied his undivided attention for over fifty years. A few years later he passed to his reward.

When conversing about Father Walker, Mr. Stewart expressed an oft-repeated desire that *his* labors and his life might be terminated together, and with his resigned prayer in this matter, the assertion of the Psalmist was verified, "The Lord will fulfil the desire of them that love him."

Shrinking from the cold hand of death,
I soon shall gather up my feet;
Shall soon resign this fleeting breath,
And die—my father's God to meet.

Numbered among thy people, I
Expect with joy thy face to see;
Because thou didst for sinners die,
Jesus, in death remember me.

Oh that, without a lingering groan,
I may the welcome word receive;
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live.

Walk with me through the dreadful shade,
And, certified that thou art mine,
My spirit, calm and undismayed,
I shall into thy hands resign.

No anxious doubt, no guilty gloom,
Shall damp whom Jesus' presence cheers;
My Light, my Life, my God is come,
And glory in his face appears.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. STEWART ON MOORESTOWN CIRCUIT.

Extract—His humility and fitness for his work—Still labors with unabated eagerness—Appointments on his new charge—A sense of responsibility—Commends himself and his people to God—Faith—Methodism in Moorestown—Plan concerted to interest the people—Success—A protracted meeting—Blessed results—A dream—Conversion of a young lady who avoided a protracted meeting—Changed spiritual aspect of the town—The swearer converted—Sudden death of a scorner—Revivals in various parts of the circuit—Close of the year—Solicited to return—Consents—Two colleagues—Death of his daughter Maria—A new church—Revival therein—Cries of penitents interrupt the preacher—The ministerial trio at Blackwood-town—Success—Close of the year.

"He who engages himself to fight the battles of the Lord," says the Rev. Mr. Gilpin, "has need of uncommon strength and irresistible arms; and if he be destitute of one or the other, he vainly expects to stand in the evil day. The Christian warrior is exposed to a vast variety of dangers, and is beset with innumerable enemies. His whole life is one continual scene of warfare, in which he wrestles sometimes with visible, sometimes with invisible adversaries." For the labors of the sacred warfare,

Mr. Stewart considered himself altogether unequal and deficient; he considered himself the weakest of Christ's followers, and unworthy to bear his glorious banner. But while he presumed to boast of no inherent power, and was ever ready to accept the most undesirable post, he was regarded by his brethren as a man "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." United to Christ as the branch to the vine, he was constantly deriving abundant supplies of vigor from the fountain-head of power. Mr. Stewart's resignation and fortitude were remarkable; by the former he was enabled to grapple with the strongest enemy; by the latter, he was taught "to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "From his first admission to the true church militant, he was fully persuaded that armor forged by the art of man must needs be insufficient either for conquest or security in a spiritual warfare. He saw it absolutely necessary to be furnished with weapons of celestial temper, and was dissatisfied with his state till he had put on *the whole armor of God*, with a determined resolution never to put it off till his last conflict should be decided. He then appeared in the complete Christian uniform; from the helmet of salvation to the sandals of peace, all was entire and perfectly fitted for his spiritual frame. No mortal part was left unguarded, nor was any joint of his harness so loose as to admit of a thrust from the enemy.

"On no occasion was he ever known to affect anything like spiritual pomp; yet, on every occasion

was there a dignity of character in his deportment that raised the veneration of any beholder. As the heroes of antiquity were distinguished from warriors of an inferior order by the splendor of their arms, so, by the uncommon lustre of his graces, he was distinguished as a chieftain in the Christian bands."

"Up to this time," says Mrs. Stewart, "in all his toil, endurance and privation, I never heard a murmur escape my husband's lips. When favored with temporal or spiritual blessings, he was humbled by an acknowledged sense of unworthiness, and praised God for remembering the low estate of his servant. When afflicted or depressed, he attributed his trials to the providence of God, and alluding to the fact that his Lord and Saviour was "made perfect through suffering"—prayed that a similar glorious result might be effected in his own experience."

Conference, in the spring of 1845, was held in Mount Holly, and Mr. Stewart, agreeably to an invitation tendered several months before, was entertained, during the session, at the house of Mr. Charles Bates. This gentleman exercised an exemplary benevolence, foreshadowing that genuine and exemplary Christian character which afterwards signalized his religious walk.

Although fatigued with the constant and severe labors of Swedesborough Circuit, Mr. Stewart seemed eager to be *favored* with one of no less dimensions. When spoken to concerning Moorestown Circuit, he showed no symptoms of unwillingness to accept the charge, although it was known to be considerably

heavier than his last. He was consequently set down for this place, and his family was removed to the village of Moorestown, the last of April. Revs. Joseph Sleeper and Rodney Winans had preceded him; the latter was continued, having been there but one year. The appointments at this time were Moorestown, Bridgeborough, Bethel, Asbury, Coopertown, Gibbsborough, Long-a-coming, Blackwoodtown, Chew's Landing, Waterford, and Jackson. Rancocas was adopted in the course of the first year; making in all twelve, and these were scattered at a long distance from each other. Nevertheless, this man of temerity and energy surveyed the schedule of his new circuit with apparent gratification, and thanked God for the privilege of preaching to so many people, as in it, he would have afforded a wide opportunity of warning sinners, and beseeching them for Christ's sake to be reconciled to God.

He felt an increased weight of responsibility, and divesting himself of all self-reliance, before commencing his labors, he threw himself before God, and with groanings of spirit, besought strength from the Omnipotent, and the unceasing presence of him without whom no good can be accomplished. That God who delights to hear and answer prayer, vouchsafed an assurance in the mind of the supplicant, that an abundant spiritual harvest should be gathered; and he "went forth bearing precious seed," confidently expecting "to come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." There was but *one* Methodist brother who resided in Moorestown, and this was the

sexton of the church. There were several stanch members, who were farmers, living a few miles out of the village, but the whole membership did not exceed fifty, and the congregations, during Mr. Stewart's first six months, did not half fill the house. There was but one class; this was led by Mr. Deacon Brock, a zealous advocate for the claims of Methodism, who declared he would cling to his sect as long "as there was a single plank left in her structure." The strong opposing influences in the place rendered it hard for the Methodists to survive; in fact, for several years they had decreased in numbers. To the untiring ardor and persevering exertions of Brothers Deacon Brock, John Hankison and Macajah Dobbins, the existence of any membership at all, may be traced. Mr. Stewart viewed this truly deplorable state of affairs in the town of his residence with much pain, and appealed to God for instruction how to proceed in order to enlarge Zion's borders. He looked around and saw the Baptists and the Episcopalians in a flourishing condition, and he inquired, "Ought not Methodism, with her many means of grace, her specially advantageous institutions, to prosper, at least as much as these?" He did not know, or ask, what had been the plans and movements of his predecessors, but concerted a system for himself, upon which he implored the blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He sought opportunities to become familiar with the citizens of the town, and, as often as time would permit, rode out into the country among the farmers, talking everywhere about Jesus' dying love, and the

design of his mission to earth. He found this procedure had a most satisfactory and happy effect in bringing out those who had become cold and indifferent concerning important matters, and enticing men and women of altogether worldly minds to frequent the courts of the Lord's house.

Early in the fall a protracted meeting was commenced, but owing to the exceeding sterility of the spot, a week elapsed before any encouraging symptoms of prosperity were visible. The congregation, however, slowly increased, and greater seriousness among the people began to be observed. At length a few youths were induced to "remember their Creator," and present an acceptable offering of the freshness and strength of their juvenile hearts to him who redeemed them with his own most precious blood. The clear conversion of some of these deeply impressed older hearts, and several acknowledged their desire for the joys which come by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ; but to induce them to act *now* in the matter, seemed impossible. At this juncture Mr. Stewart had a dream, which, though he did not ordinarily place any particular confidence in visions or impressions, strangely strengthened his spirit. He fancied himself walking through a large orchard, upon whose trees, *although it was in the proper season*, no fruit could be seen. He at length arrived at its termination, and upon the very last tree were a few *unripe cherries.*

These were *carefully and closely watched*, and in that wonderfully short period of time which dreams

require to perform such operations, *they were ripened.* A second glance at the trees which he had passed, presented to view other and larger fruits, which, though still indistinct from their being *of the same color as the leaves, gradually reddened and became beautifully conspicuous.* Mr. Stewart's mind involuntarily interpreted this dream, and thanking God for the encouragement it afforded, he said to his wife, "We shall have a glorious time in Moorestown yet."

Soon after this one of the most influential men of the town bowed an humble suppliant in the church, and in a few days professed conversion. "Other fruit" of the labors of the ministry was soon perceived, and in five weeks *the membership was doubled;* fifty joining on probation. In this work, the Revs. William P. Corbet, Charles Kingsbury, Crook Vancleve, and John Blythe, afforded assistance, and the church was too small to contain the people who were attracted to the place. Among the converts were sturdy farmers, energetic mechanics, and intelligent, active young men and women, who greatly strengthened the cause of religion, and entered heartily into the labors of the Sabbath school.

A young lady residing in the vicinity of "New Salem Church," in Philadelphia, whose parents were opposed to her connecting herself with the Methodists, came on a visit to some friends near Moorestown, about this time, that she might avoid the possibility of yielding to a strong inclination to attend a meeting in progress at that church. These "friends" came to see the work in Moorestown, and Miss P——

accompanied them. She saw that to fly from opportunity to seek God was impossible, and she felt that all effort to put aside conviction of sin was still more useless. This state of feeling was unfolded to the lady she was visiting, who, being herself a Christian, advised her to embrace religion without procrastination. The step was taken, and she was soundly converted to God. So powerfully was she blessed that she remained in a state of unconsciousness for several hours. She was taken to the parsonage, where she remained during the night, and, after wholesome advice from Mr. Stewart, which she promised to follow, she departed rejoicing in the indubitable evidence of pardoned sin.

After the close of the protracted meeting, Mr. Stewart found himself surrounded by nine Methodist families in Moorestown; and several others, one or two of whose number had joined the church, welcomed him warmly to their houses. On the street he was accosted by those who claimed him as their spiritual father, and expressed the gratitude of their appreciative hearts in ecstatic language, that never failed to bring tears to his eyes and the praise of Christ to his lips.

Brother B——, who, previous to his conversion, had been addicted to profanity, called at the parsonage and "confessed" to having, in an unguarded moment, repeated an oath, which at one time had frequently escaped him without producing anxiety. Ignorant of the wiles of Satan, he was strongly inclined to yield to the temptation that he had not yet

passed "from death unto life;" or if he had, that the culpable violation of a commandment should excommunicate him from the fellowship and sympathy of the church. He was much cast down and perplexed in his mind, and not until assured by Mr. Stewart that his anxiety was a proof of the genuineness of his change of heart, would he consent to permit his name to remain upon the class-book. A second brother B——, who, to employ the language of another, had in consecrating his life to the Saviour, been "compelled to cut off both arms and pluck out both eyes," was railed by his deserted companions on account of his new and straight course of conduct. "Elisha," said one, "we suppose you will not come into the bar-room and take a convivial drink with us; we understand the marrow has been extracted from your bones."

The man who uttered this sentence, before entering that "bar-room" again, was borne past it upon the shoulders of four friends, and in dying he left no hope of a preparation to stand with joy and composure in the presence of his Judge in the great day.

Was this one of the judgments that invariably follow rejected offers of mercy?

Revivals were had during the winter at Waterford, Blackwoodtown, Bethel, Gibbsborough, Coopertown, and Asbury. The first of these was a town whose inhabitants were chiefly glass manufacturers, and those engaged about the factories. Almost every house was visited graciously, and the society was greatly strengthened by the enlisting of a score of

strong-nerved men, who labored from the first with their "might," for the propagation of the cause they had espoused.

At Bethel, the work was extraordinary; whole families, with united heart and strength, coming into the church simultaneously. One of these was that of Mr. Wm. Stowe, which stands, at this day, a monument of the mercy of God, displayed at that time, and of the power of Christ "to keep them whom the Father gives him, that no man shall be able to pluck them out of his hand."

One of the liberal brethren of the charge had a wife who was a refined and amiable Quakeress. She was, at this meeting, brought to an experimental knowledge of pardoned sin, by a direct and indisputable witness of adoption into the family of heaven, and thenceforward walked "*in* the light as Christ is in the light."

Brother and Sister Browning, from this date, became warm friends of Mr. Stewart, and he remembered and spoke of the many exhibitions of their unfeigned love, during the week in which his demise occurred.

At Asbury and Coopertown, the congregations were large beyond precedent, and goodly numbers reinforced the Christian regiments of the places.

During the whole of Mr. Stewart's first year on Moorestown Circuit, he continued to labor with unabated fervor and zeal. He was seldom home long at a time, except when his appointment chanced to fall in Moorestown, and then every hour, except the

sacred one of the Sabbath, was spent in visiting and exhorting them with whom God has blessed his ministrations to be "steadfast, immovable, fixed; always abounding in the work of the Lord." In this way, those recently converted were preserved from backsliding, or omitting duties; and he expressed it as his opinion that "more good was often accomplished by one visit than by two sermons."

The people admired his temper, his zeal, his sociability, his self-denial, and his fidelity to the cause he represented; and in view of all these, *they loved him.* He often expressed a sense of obligation to the brethren and sisters of Moorestown Circuit for the sentiments which they kindly uttered, but he always added, "I seek not the eulogies of men."

Nevertheless, he thought it a very great treasure to have a good name, which, in his opinion, was rather to be chosen than great riches. Of one thing he was confident: he had never shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, nor sought to soften the truth. God was his witness that he had endeavored from the first to declare the gospel of the grace of God with all simplicity and plainness. And, in the consciousness of having done RIGHT, he was happy, and praised God out of a pure heart fervently.

Before repairing to Conference, in 1846, he again thought seriously of "a rest year;" this, he reflected, would be the more convenient now that his daughter Sarah was married, and his youngest son absent from home. Being, however, earnestly solicited to return the second year, he nerved himself for "*one*

more campaign," and went to Newark, April 21st, resolved to return, if the good pleasure of Providence had so ordained it. In this event, the people of the circuit consented to defray the expenses of a third preacher; and Revs. William Rodgers and John I. Morrow were appointed his colleagues.

Mr. and Mrs. Stewart were alone; their youngest son, now 14 years old, had gone to Bordentown, where he was engaged in a store. One of the brethren at Moorestown proposed to board the minister and his wife, and they, in view of the solitude which must fall to Mrs. Stewart in her husband's absence, accepted the proposition. She was kindly cared for, throughout the year, by the friends with whom she made her home. Letters from Mr. Coombs informed them of the illness of their daughter Maria; and the apprehensions awakened in their mind at the first were never allayed. Consumption, which had robbed them of two children, seized a third; and before a year, Maria fell a victim to its ravages. Her remains were laid in the churchyard at Port Elizabeth. Rev. Thos. Christopher, who visited her frequently in her illness, wrote and published the following obituary:—

"Anna Maria was early taught the necessity of religion by her pious parents; and, at the age of 17 years, she was soundly converted to God, and rejoiced in the knowledge of sins forgiven. She soon joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which she continued a faithful member until her death. It might be said of her that she was an every-day

Christian; and the great burden of her mind was to know how she might accomplish the greatest amount of good. During her protracted illness, her confidence in God was unshaken, and when the last and critical hour arrived, her moral sky was perfectly clear, and she was all the time happy in the love of the Saviour, entertaining a bright prospect of a better home in heaven. She spoke to her friends a few hours before her decease, and said to them: 'These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' She uttered the sentence with apparent delight and resignation. She had much to try her faith, but she came out of the furnace like gold tried in the fire, and was able to exhibit the power of sanctifying grace; for during the whole of her affliction, she was never heard to utter one murmur or complaint; and when called to step into the cold waves of Jordan, she feared no evil, but passed over triumphantly, victoriously crying, with her last breath —'Jesus! Jesus!'"

A few weeks after the opening of Mr. Stewart's second year on Moorestown Circuit, the enterprising Christians of Bridgeborough commenced the erection of a new church in that place. It was completed in the summer, and the dedication sermon preached.

Meetings were protracted during several weeks, and scores sought and found peace in believing—

"Asked and received in Jesus' name."

One Sabbath evening, at the beginning of service, a

voice was distinctly heard near the church, earnestly praying "O Lord, have mercy on my soul! Save the vilest of the vile! Turn not thy face from one who seeks the salvation of his immortal soul, through the merits of Jesus' blood! Hast thou not promised, O Lord, to receive *all* that come unto thee? Are not thy promises sure? Reveal thyself to *the prince of sinners!* Reveal thyself now!"

This earnest penitent was sought, and at length found, kneeling upon the ground, in a grove that stood back of the church, where he had become so engrossed with the spirit of sincere supplication, that his thoughts were closed to all beside. He was led to the church, and Mr. Stewart, after singing and prayer, arose to announce his text, when he was interrupted by a second ebullition of the penitent's surcharged heart. "O Lord, have mercy on *my* soul, for Jesus' sake! I cannot cease nor rest till pure within; and Jesus' blood can make the foulest clean; his blood *availed* for me." The evidently sincere and agonized tones of this man won the sympathy of the preacher's heart. Other seekers caught the spirit of wrestling, and in a few minutes the church fairly resounded with the cries of penitent sinners. Mr. Stewart thought it advisable to desist from his intention of preaching, and descending to the altar, said—

"The Spirit of the Lord, in answer to prayer, is working among the people. Sinners do not require preaching to-night; they are convinced of their lost condition, *feel* their inbred corruption, and are ready

to lay hold on the hope set before them. Let them come up here, where we can labor with, and for them! See how they fly to Jesus! When penitents come thus, the blessing is soon obtained!

Weary souls, that wander wide,
From the central point of bliss;
Turn to Jesus crucified,
Turn to those dear wounds of his;
Sink into the purple flood,
Rise into the life of God.

Find in Christ the way of peace—
Peace unspeakable—unknown;
By his pain, he gives you ease,
Life, by his expiring groan;
Rise, exalted by his fall—
Find in Christ your all in all.

During this short exhortation, and the repeating of these stanzas, the altar was filled with men and women, inquiring what they must do to be saved; and one of the most extraordinary occasions which Mr. Stewart witnessed in the annals of his ministry, he was permitted to enjoy that night. He had often expressed a wish, upon closing a meeting, that the one on the following night might begin where its predecessor terminated; and this memorable Sabbath evening at Bridgeborough he acknowledged was the realization of his most ardent desire in that way. In this work the preachers upon the circuit were aided materially by William Sharp, a local preacher residing in the vicinity, and by Daniel Stockton, John Hankison, and Macajah Dobbins, energetic, working

Christians, whom no extent of religious exercise seemed to disqualify or injure.

For five months the ministerial trio labored without cessation in protracted meetings. Not a single appointment was omitted. Mr. Stewart appeared to work, indeed, as though impressed that this would be his "last campaign;" yet he never expressed a doubt but that he should repair his physical deficiencies, and go forth with renewed spiritual strength and purpose, after a twelvemonth furlough. He was absent from home almost constantly; sometimes would arrive in Moorestown, from one extremity of the circuit, tarry an hour *to rest his horse*, and then, repacking his portmanteau, and re-furnishing his medicine box, speed off to an opposite quarter, and preach with all his might the same evening. A glorious outpouring of the spirit of the Highest crowned the ministerial efforts in Blackwoodtown, during the month of December. The variety of talent and style with which the circuit was favored, was brought to bear upon this place. First came Mr. Stewart with a presentation of the terrors of the law, accompanied by loud exhortations to flee the wrath to come. Mr. Morrow followed with glowing, imagined portraits of the glory that shall be revealed in the saints who "wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." Mr. Rodgers, with superlative tenderness, brought up the rear, by contemplating *the love of Jesus*, so signally displayed in his poignant sufferings and ignominious death which he *proposed*, in order to effect the redemption of a

guilty world, having no claim upon his mediation. The preaching of the word was followed by the most desirable results: the membership were built up in their most holy faith; backsliders were reclaimed; and sinners were converted, and connected themselves with the church. The year was one of unusual enjoyment and prosperity on the circuit. Mr. Stewart's last two years were ones, the recollection of which afforded him much comfort when realizing that he must soon die, and account for the moments given him to preach to sinners in the world; ones to whose *every hour* he could revert, and see *no misemployment.* He acknowledged, at their close, that he had not labored as he might have done, and declared, if his health would permit, and Conference allow, he would willingly return *a third year*, and work still more energetically for the eternal salvation of poor dying sinners. When he glanced at the appointments, and saw the numbers who attended regularly upon the means of grace, some of whom appeared "*almost* persuaded to become Christians," and yet not altogether resolved to lay down the weapons of their rebellion, his heart's warm, earnest aspirations went out for them, and he could not repress a strong desire to return, and strive to hold up Christ in a more effectual manner. "After traveling thousands of miles, in all sorts of weather," inquires he, "what have I done? My preaching has been poor and weak, and I am an unprofitable servant! Yet God has smiled upon, and blessed my humble efforts, in some places; he has given me remarkable strength

to endure the wear and tear of a rough life, and he has filled my heart with *glory!* How much have I to be thankful for! Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

> "I will praise thee, I will praise thee;
> Where shall I thy praise begin."

He bade adieu to the circuit on the 18th of April, 1847, and repaired to Salem, to attend the Conference which was appointed to be held there. And this was the last Conference he was permitted to enjoy. According to resolution, he asked for a year in which to rest, that he might renew his physical energies, and be the better prepared to profitably employ the time which God might add to his life, and for the labor which he hoped to perform in the future. In his absence from the Conference-room, Bishop Waugh inquired—"What is the opinion of the Presiding Elder of the district concerning Bro. Stewart's proposed supernumerary year?" To which Rev. John Porter responded: "Bro. Stewart has labored long and faithfully, and *requires* rest. I shall vote for the brother's release; *but I question whether he will not work about as much as any of us after all!*" The vote was unanimous, and Mr. Stewart went to Bordentown, where he had made arrangements to stay with his married daughter during the year.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM LABOR TO REWARD.

Review—It is a cross for Mr. Stewart to desist from preaching—Revisits New Egypt Circuit—Goes to Penn's Neck—Closing address—In Salem and Harrisonville—Preaches three times in one day—His constancy—Manner of life during his supernumerary time—Takes advantage of every afflicting providence to urge a perfect resignation to the will of God—His son James has consumption—Visits him at Millville—Preaches in Pittsgrove—Labors in Trenton—Closing sermons in Burlington—Sickness—Death—Grave-stone erected to his memory—Inscription—Death of James—Conclusion.

We have now arrived at the closing year of Mr. Stewart's life. Faithfully had he labored for seventeen years, in persevering effort to assist in the evangelization of the world. The success with which his labors were attended may be known from the fact that, during this time, he received *five thousand souls* into probationary membership. His meat and drink from the date of his receiving a license, was the preaching of *Christ crucified!* And he was not content to preach occasionally, but rejoiced to raise his voice in honor of Zion's God at all times, and in all places. He added new appointments to every circuit of which he had charge, although several were of

enormous extent when received; and, after adopting such, he never omitted their regular fulfilling. He had an exceedingly humble opinion of his own abilities, and deemed no appointment to which he might be sent too indifferent for his qualifications, nor too hard for his energies. He was possessed of the genuine, self-sacrificing, missionary spirit, and, had he been converted earlier in life, his inclinations must have directed his footsteps, as they frequently did his mind, to heathen nations. Three years in succession he preached *over four hundred sermons each year!* "He studied to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Although, at the time of his retiring from the active service, he regretted not having done more to advance the glorious cause of Christianity, he felt that he could exclaim, with Paul, "I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God." Several of the circuits upon which he rode paid their preachers but small salaries; he and his family were compelled to retrench and economize, but he was able to thank God in retrospecting his ecclesiastical history, that his beloved ones had never *suffered* for the want of the necessaries of life, *and he but seldom!* Thrice he recollected to have gone to bed hungry, after traveling long, weary miles through rain and darkness; "but," says he, "I had meat and drink that the world knew not of, and I was more favored than my Master, for I had a

pillow upon which to repose, while he had not even where to lay his head."

He was fortunate enough, however, by his pleasant sociability, to win the esteem of many affluent men, who, not belonging to the church, and consequently not paying systematically to its support, were accustomed to send occasionally of their abundance to him, whom they thus materially assisted. It was a coincidence which he pronounced "providential," that these supplies came when most needed. But while he sought to make the acquaintance of the rich, to point them to the source of "true riches," he did not avoid the poor, to whom he felt that he had an especial commission from God! Rich and poor, high and low, black and white, all received a warm hand from Mr. Stewart, and for all these classes and conditions of men he earnestly prayed every time he raised his voice in audible supplication.

During the first three months after his arrival in Bordentown, he realized it a greater hardship to refrain from sounding the gospel trump, than he had ever experienced in preaching ten times a week. He was glad when called upon occasionally by his old friend, Caleb Lippincott, at that time stationed in Bordentown, to officiate in the pulpit; but, after exercising thus, he felt that he had not that bodily vigor of which he had, through life, been so remarkable an example. Early in the summer, he took a ride through New Egypt Circuit; passing two weeks with his old friends at Imlays Hill, Elytown and New Egypt. Returning, he set out to attend "an extra

meeting," which was being held in the new church upon a spot of blessed recollection in Penn's Neck. Here he preached twice, with great acceptance, to crowded congregations. On the latter evening he delivered a valedictory exhortation: "He feared sometimes that there were those who had attended upon his ministrations in that place, who had successfully resisted the Holy Spirit's influences up to the present time. They had given him the warm hand of friendship; he believed they loved him; but they did not love the Saviour, and how could he leave them contentedly, when he knew their intercourse must terminate with life—this short life—and an eternity in prospect? He could not, he thanked God, he could not go away, perhaps forever, and not feel an anxiety for their eternal well-being; but he thanked Him the more earnestly that their fraternal communion *need* not end with life. One drop of Christ's blood possessed sufficient efficacy to purify the vilest of earth's contaminated sons. Perhaps this might be the last time he should have the privilege of admonishing them! The next news, peradventure, would be, that poor Stewart was dead! Should he see them in Paradise? Would they not, when they heard of his demise, remember that they too must soon pass away? Would they not promise to meet him in heaven? Would they not start *now?*"

Thus affectionately and pathetically did he speak to the people of Penn's Neck, for the last time indeed; and with tears rolling over his cheeks, he resumed his seat, and buried his face in both hands.

From Penn's Neck he went to Salem, where he remained a week, and preached several times at the solicitation of his former colleague, Rev. S. Y. Monroe; thence to Harrisonville, and preached twice. Thus, as he did not experience any particular inconvenience at the time, his labors, which had been abridged during the summer, were increased as the usual season of protracted meetings approached. He had lost the vigor of youth and the energy of manhood, but his intellect was unimpaired, and his zeal as ardent as ever. The graces of his character were so mellowed by enduring the toils of his arduous labors, that public respect for him was augmented, and he could not go where he was known without an irresistible appeal to preach. Upon one occasion, he went to Bristol on Saturday, to visit a relative residing in that town. He remained over the Sabbath, and was persuaded by the stationed pastor of the place to preach *once* in the morning. He felt strongly warmed by the Spirit while dispensing the word, and wished at its conclusion that the time of his furlough were expired. Longing to *hear* the gospel proclaimed which he had tried to preach in the forenoon, he rode four miles into the country, to a small Methodist church, and entering it, seated himself near the door. Observed by the circuit preacher, he was called into the pulpit and prevailed upon to lift his voice a second time. He returned to Bristol; he whose regular appointment it was to preach was sick; there was none to fill the vacant desk, and Mr.

Stewart the third time announced a text, and essayed to expound it. "Ask me to do anything but preach," said this worthy legate of the cross, "and I have the power to decline; but to refuse standing in a place where all my desires are centred, towards which an irresistible force moves me, and I can only be passive."

"*Preach and die*," said Mrs. Stewart, almost indignant at this culpable disregard of his precarious health.

"Preach *or* die," he replied, meekly.

"It is no uncommon thing," says the Rev. Mr. Gilpin, "to behold the professors of Christianity divested at a maturer age of that burning love and that irresistible zeal by which they were peculiarly distinguished in early life. Of the many thousands who have, in every age, begun the sacred race with an apparent determination to obtain the prize, the greater part, either wearied with the inconveniences of the way or deluded by the suggestions of the world, if they have not altogether forsaken the path of life, have proceeded in it with so much irresolution and weakness, that, at the conclusion of their course, it has remained a matter of much uncertainty whether they have reached or fallen short of the mark of their high calling."

With Mr. Stewart it was not so. From the beginning to the end of his pilgrimage, there was never once perceptible the least tendency to a loitering or lukewarm disposition. He was every moment upon the stretch after spiritual improvement, and striving

to keep his loins girded, his feet shod, and his staff in his hand. Now that he had leisure from study, he read in the Bible almost exclusively, and prayed "without ceasing"—almost literally—passing the greater part of each morning in these holy exercises. He lived in the closest communion with God, and maintained an uninterrupted sense of his presence. All his conversation was sensible and cheerful, and was evidently intended to glorify God. He seemed always aiming to raise his own and others' spirits to a close and immediate intercourse with God, and he improved every affliction and misfortune by striving to direct their tendency to that end.

This was strikingly illustrated in the severe illness and apprehended death of his grandson, the only child of the daughter with whom he lived in Bordentown. When his parents were weeping, and refusing to be comforted, Mr. Stewart paced the room, uttering kind and soothing sentences, assuring their wounded hearts that God gently chastens them whom he loves, and blesses with tenfold greater graces those who, under his mysterious providences, maintain a right spirit, and with unswerving resignation in all his dispensations cry, "Not my will, O Lord, but thine be done."

Consumption, with its dark wing, seemed to hover over and watch an opportunity to alight upon Mr. Stewart's loved children. A communication from Millville, in which town his son James had lived for several years, announced, at this time, the unwelcome intelligence that he was perplexed with an

obstinate cough, which was baffling every effort put forth for its remedy. He and Mrs. Stewart at once repaired to Millville. From the first sight of their son—so familiar had they become with the symptoms of this unconquerable disease—they relinquished hope of his recovery. Every probable antidote, however, was recommended; but the result proved that none produced the slightest abatement of the disease.

Apprehending no immediate danger, after remaining a few days with James, they set out in a private conveyance to return home. Proceeding as far as Pittsgrove, they stopped to remain for the night with Mr. John Watson, and Mr. Stewart was induced to preach in the church which he had erected and called "Nazareth," while traveling Salem Circuit. These last visits and last sermons are remembered by those who enjoyed them, with an accurate remembrance; every word, every prayer, and almost every gesture is referred to with graphic descriptions.

His last interview with his sick son, and the prayer offered on the morning of his departure from James' family, are thus described by his daughter-in-law: "In bearing pain, James was most exemplary, and continued to be more and more so throughout his tedious illness. His father was much gratified to hear him exclaim, 'I am no more afraid of death than of my brother!' and he besought his son to disengage his thoughts from his family, for whose welfare he sometimes expressed anxiety, and to trust

God for support to his wife and children, the same as he trusted his power and willingness to take him from earth to heaven. 'Your treasure is above,' said he; 'there let your heart be also. Preserve a mind free and disencumbered. There is a rest remaining for the people of God. No state, however blest, is without its trials here; none, however melancholy, should divert the Christian's mind from that rest which must, sooner or later, if he is faithful, fall to his lot. In this life we have, now and then, a word of comfort from God, to keep up our hearts and hopes, but this is not our full enjoyment. We should never give undue thought to trouble, toil, want or fears; but having them, *go to Him who suffers them*, and has power to avert. And if they are not removed, we should remember that Christ is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and will sympathize with us, and assist us to bear them composedly. Under your pain and weariness and fear, go to God for rest, my son; he will commence that which will be perfected in glory. I am an old man: the thought of your going away from earth and consequently my view, is designed to afflict; but "God doeth all things well," and if *he* command, my heart and lips approve. I do not presume to dictate, but were I permitted to choose, I would say—let my children die first, and stand on the frontiers of the celestial country, to welcome me at my approach. The Lord's will be done.'"

How little thought Mr. Stewart that *he* should stand on "the frontiers of the celestial country" and

welcome James, whose life was now evidently soon to pass away. Yet thus it was.

"He was drawn out in an extraordinary manner at the family altar upon the day he bade us farewell for the last time. After consigning James to the care of Him who created and redeemed him, the warm and earnest aspirations of his heart went out in supplications and entreaty for her who was soon to become a widow, and for each of the children. At length, as though suddenly enabled by divine assistance to exercise the degree of faith for which he had been pleading, he ceased to bear the afflicted family upon his prayer, and arising, completed his preparations for departure cheerfully."

This long, wearisome journey to Millville, together with the deep solicitude he experienced in behalf of his son, impaired more perceptibly his infirm constitution, and for several weeks he was too unwell to attempt preaching.

A letter awaited him upon his arrival in Bordentown, from Rev. John S. Porter, presiding elder of Burlington District, who informed him of the date fixed upon for the dedication of a church in progress of erection in the city of Burlington.

* * * * * *

Rev. Charles Pitman preached in the new temple upon the 28th of December, the occasion of its opening for divine services, from the text, "The love of Christ constraineth us." (2 Cor. v. 14.) The day following, Messrs. Pitman and Stewart went over to Mount Holly, where they attended "a watch-meeting"

on the evening of the 31st. From this place the latter went to Trenton, by invitation of Rev. Clarke Polly, pastor of the Front Street church in that city, who was engaged in a protracted meeting.

On Saturday, January 8th, 1848, Mr. Stewart returned to Burlington for the purpose of spending the ensuing Sabbath with Rev. Charles H. Whitaker. In the afternoon he went two miles into the country, and on this, the last Sunday that he ever preached, exhorted in the same school-house in which, thirty years prior, he lifted his voice for the first time to sound the gospel trumpet in New Jersey.

His last two sermons were preached from Brother Whitaker's pulpit; the final one, from a text which proved, in his case, singularly true—"The time is short." (1 Cor. vii. 27.) In the delivering of this sermon, he raised his hand to his head, and slowly, and with great solemnity, said: "These gray hairs, my friends, admonish *me* that time is short."

At the conclusion of the former of these, he requested the Christians of the congregation to rise, and each take the hand of the brothers or sisters standing next them, and sing the familiar and beautiful hymn, commencing—

"Jesus my all to heaven is gone."

To the verses of this hymn, was sung with the spirit, the enlivening chorus—

"We're all united heart and hand,
Joined in one band completely;
We're marching through Immanuel's land,
Where the waters flow so sweetly."

In the course of his ministry, Mr. Stewart several times did this, and always with wonderful effect. The hearts of believers were knit together, while sinners witnessed with trembling, melting hearts, and many were led to exclaim—

"And can *I* yet delay
My little all to give?
To tear my soul from earth away
For Jesus to receive?
Nay, but I yield, I yield,
I can hold out no more,
I sink by dying love compelled,
And own thee conqueror."

He remained in Burlington until Friday, on the morning of which day he walked with Mrs. Stewart to the graveyard in which his relatives were buried. Pointing to an unoccupied spot in the family section, he said, "There is a place for me." In the afternoon he was attacked by pleurisy, with great severity, which abated but little previous to his return home in the evening.

Before leaving the house of Brother Whitaker, where every kindness had been shown him and every wish anticipated, he said to Sister Whitaker, "When I am sick, I investigate my spiritual condition to see whether, if God should call me, I am prepared to stand before him and give an account for the deeds done in the body. I am not fearful but that it is now well with me. I believe that an abundant entrance will be ministered unto me into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

* * * * * *

We have tried to trace the history of this servant of God through the arduous and eventful career of his active ministry. We come now to gaze upon him in sickness, suffering and death. We have seen the hero warring nobly on the great battle-field of the cross; we come now to inquire whether the faith and hope of that cross sustained him when called to put off his armor, and lie down to die. On Saturday, the 15th of January, his disease increased in acuteness, but on Sabbath, under medical treatment, the severity of his sufferings abated, and his family hoped that convalescence would soon allow him to mingle among them in the domestic circle. On Monday and Tuesday he suffered successive attacks, but on Wednesday seemed vastly improved; and Thursday he arose and walked across the chamber. The state of his mind during this time was calm, confident and resigned. He expressed no fear of death, but felt that he could adopt the language of the apostle, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain."

It was painfully evident that his system had received a violent shock, but as yet no doubts were entertained of his recovery. On Friday the 21st, he grew rapidly worse, his disease assuming a typhoid form. From this date his mind aberrated, and much of the time he seemed insensible to pain. But at family prayers, which were held in his room on the evening of this day, when his son-in-law, Mr. George R. Story, had concluded reading in the Bible, he suddenly opened his eyes, looked up and said, "George, you read the whole of the 103d Psalm."

On Saturday and Sunday he was unconscious, except at intervals, when he betrayed no anxiety, but uttered short sentences expressive of happiness and trust in God. His speedy decline was relieved by no favorable indications after Friday, but was accelerated by sudden and alarming symptoms.

On the morning of Monday the 24th, Brother Whitaker came from Burlington. Entering the room and approaching his bedside, he took his hand and said, "Brother Stewart, do you not know Brother Whitaker?" There was a seeming effort of recognition, but no reply. He continued to fail during the morning; at 12 o'clock, a change, betokening the near approach of death, took place. His breathing grew shorter until 2 o'clock, when life ebbed away, and the spirit of "Father Stewart" took its flight to that brighter abode, for which, during thirty-five years, it had been his single object to prepare. His last intelligible words were, "All is well."

Thus passed away a pure and noble spirit of earth, in the 58th year of his age, and 18th of his ministry. His bodily remains were conveyed to Burlington on Wednesday, January 26th, and deposited in the Methodist churchyard. His funeral sermon was preached by Rev. John S. Porter, from the text, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people were added unto the Lord." (Acts xi. 24.)

His friends in Burlington subsequently erected a

grave-stone, upon which is engraved the following inscription:—

TO THE MEMORY

OF THE

REV. THOMAS G. STEWART,

OF THE NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE M. E. CHURCH,

Who departed this life in the hope of the Gospel, Jan. 24, 1848, in the 58th year of his age and 18th of his ministry.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

Mr. Stewart's son James lingered upon the earth till the 9th of June, when his sufferings were terminated. The grace of God was gloriously manifested in the patient, peaceful and triumphant state of mind in which he endured affliction and died. His mortal remains were interred in the graveyard at Millville, there to await the resurrection of the just.

Death wounds to cure! we fall; we rise; we reign!
Spring from our fetters; fasten in the skies;
Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.
Death gives us more than was in Eden lost.
This king of terrors is the prince of peace;
When shall *we* die to vanity, pain, death?
When shall we die? *When shall we live forever?*

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